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Remembering *genius Londinii*:

London writers and the spirit of the city

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Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed,
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The question remains: How can place, plain old place, be so powerful in matters of memory? In what does the power of place for memory consist? We have seen Aristotle driven to speak of a place's "active influence", its "distinct potencies". Similarly, the Romans posited a "*genius loci*", an indwelling spirit, for each significant place [- -]. In English, we still speak of "the spirit of a place", and ascribe to particular places attractive or repelling forces far beyond what their position in geographic space or historic time might indicate.

—Edward Casey: *Remembering*

One of these days I will write about London, & how it takes up the private life & carries on, without any effort.

—Virginia Woolf: *Diary*, 5 May 1924

The city is time made visible.

—Yi-Fu Tuan: *Space, Time, Place: A Humanistic Frame*

Abstract

The subject of my doctoral dissertation *Remembering genius Londinii: London novelists and the spirit of the city* is the role of memory in the recognition of *genius loci*, as presented in the novels of four London authors: in Peter Ackroyd's *The House of Doctor Dee* (1993), *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (1994), and *Three Brothers* (2013), in Maureen Duffy's *Capital* (1975), in Michael Moorcock's *Mother London* (1988), and in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000). My analysis of the novels is premised on the proposition that in order to come into contact with the spirit of a certain place, we need to examine the crossroads of place and memory in its different forms.

The central interpretive concept of my dissertation, *genius loci*, is strongly interdisciplinary, having together with a closely related concept, *sense of place*, inspired scholars in various fields of study. I shall approach the subject mainly via the ideas of phenomenologically disposed humanistic geography and environmental psychology, while staying within the context of literary research.

The readings of the novels are organized thematically to expose the formation of *genius Londinii* from different angles, varying in the interrelationship of place and memory and the impact of individual versus collective perspective. The first three chapters focus on the novels of Peter Ackroyd, Maureen Duffy, and Michael Moorcock, examining the evolution of *genius loci* in a city with immemorial layers of past, in a city serving as

a place of growth, and in a city threatened by a collective crisis. The fourth chapter rounds off the analysis by focusing on the spirit of the city from the perspective of London's substantial immigrant population and, along with a thematic reading of Zadie Smith's novel, discusses the feasibility of the main premise of this study in defining *genius Londinii* when personal or collective memories – or both – lie elsewhere.

Acknowledgements

While the prolonged duration of this particular dissertation process has incontestably exceeded all academic recommendations — to speak nothing of non-academic ones — it has also brought about a whole host of people to thank for their support and encouragement over the years.

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able to benefit from the discernment of several generations of doctoral students in the Comparative Literature Research Seminar and I want to thank them all most warmly. In addition, the seminar sessions instructed by visiting scholars have offered some extra food for thought, for which I want to express sincere thanks to Emeritus Prof. Christopher Prendergast, Dean Suzanne Keen, and Prof. Susan Elizabeth Sweeney. Lotte Troupp offered invaluable help in linguistical matters as well as important suggestions concerning the content of my thesis, for which I want to warmly thank her. I am also grateful to all the students in my courses over the years for their refreshing comments and questions. Many thanks also to Kenneth Quek, whose revision of my thesis helped in smoothing out the edges of my English. The research grants of the Finnish Cultural Foundation, the Ella and Georg Ehrnrooth Foundation, and the Oskar Öflund Foundation, as well as the dissertation completion grant of the University of Helsinki provided important financial support for the writing of this thesis during various stages of the process, for which I am deeply grateful.

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A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s

I have also been blessed with an army of inspiring and supporting relatives, who have also been considerate enough not to ask too many questions concerning the status of my thesis over the years. My mother Terttu and my late father Päivö encouraged us children to search for answers to all kinds of questions in the bulging bookshelves of my pre-Internet childhood home, for which I am eternally grateful. The brotherly teasing as well as whole-hearted encouragement by my elder and younger brothers, Jouni and Hartti, have also acted as important spices in the dissertation process, a warm thank you to you both! (I did *not* retire as a doctoral student after all!) I also want to thank my parents-in-law Tuula Lukkarinen and Jussi Pulkkinen with their respective spouses Hannu Lukkarinen and Liivia Klaus for showing a supportive attitude over the years. Special thanks to Jussi for the comfortable and deliciously yellow office chair, without which the long hours of the writing process would have been even more agonizing.

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beginning to find their academic opportunities. Their determination continues to be a great inspiration.

However, my warmest thanks go to my hairy four- and two-legged home team. Over the years, five feline friends have acted as domestic supervisors of my work, correcting my typing and teaching me to play with the mouse. After Popo, Oliver, and Lissu, Saima and Nipa have now jointly inherited the important position of the Resident Study Cat. Thanks guys, bonus tuna coming your way! Finally, the greatest thanks go to my husband Janne Pulkkinen, without whose loving support, priceless sense of humour, and bodhisattva-like patience the dissertation process would have been much, much more difficult.

Helsinki, April 2018

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Abbreviations

Novels under analysis

<i>C</i>	Maureen Duffy: <i>Capital</i> (1975)
<i>DL</i>	Peter Ackroyd: <i>Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem</i> (1994)
<i>HDD</i>	Peter Ackroyd: <i>The House of Doctor Dee</i> (1993)
<i>ML</i>	Michael Moorcock: <i>Mother London</i> (1988)
<i>TB</i>	Peter Ackroyd: <i>Three Brothers</i> (2013)
<i>WT</i>	Zadie Smith: <i>White Teeth</i> (2000)

Other abbreviations

<i>BA</i>	<i>Britannica Academic</i>
<i>HG</i>	<i>Human Geography: An Essential Anthology</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>

—1—

Introduction

On a warm July afternoon, several years ago, I was having a long walk in the neighbourhood of our summer cottage, when a grimy Toyota well past its prime stopped beside me and a man's stubbly face poked out of the driver's window asking directions to an old farmhouse nearby. Inside, behind a greyish pair of furry dice, I could see a woman fiddling around with the controls of the car radio with her cigarette-free hand, absently puffing smoke out of the other window and ostensibly not in the least interested in the aim of their drive. After guiding them in the right direction, I was already stepping aside in order to let them pass and to continue with my walk when the man suddenly asked if I belonged to *The Family*.

Had we been having the conversation on a Sicilian road, his question might have made me slightly nervous, but in that particular area of Finnish countryside, it was easy to guess that he was referring to a totally other sort of clan. The dusty country road I had been trekking on meanders through a large island in Lake Päijänne where my mother's ancestors have lived since the sixteenth century, and, on that island — as well as on the neighbouring mainland — practically everyone you happen to meet on the road has at least some connection to this particular family. ("Inbred stock", to quote my beloved husband.)

When I confirmed being a member of *The Family*, the man jumped out of his car and rushed to shake my hand. With shining eyes, he reported belonging to the family himself, too, and, apparently following a spell of acute nostalgia, he was now searching for the farmhouse where he had once spent a happy childhood summer holiday with his father's relatives. It seemed that meeting a new relative — although a very distant one — gave his remembrance trip a special sheen.

The encounter with this stranger-relative left me contemplating the significance of family and community in general, of memory and of place. Although I probably had no more genes in common with this man than with any random Finn — and very few other common denominators — the chance meeting had oddly warmed my mind as well. However, in retrospect, it was not so much the family connection as the location that had the greatest influence on the mood of the encounter. In a clan with already thousands of members, our place of origin has become more essential than our genes as a connecting link. Instead of a family in the literal sense of the word, *The Family* has become more like any other community with distinct spatial coordinates, and, consistently, even the family association is named after the island rather than the distant forefather. The island is also a huge container of memories, as generations after generations have left marks of their lives on the soil and in the buildings of the island. For those of us who still live on the island — or at least spend our holidays there — the island has also become a personal memory place, to which we continue to add new memory layers every day. As Simon Schama (1996, 7) has noted, landscape truly “is built up as much from strata of memory as from rock”.

Such were my thoughts as I ambled back home, and somewhere along the road it occurred to me: what if there actually loomed a collective experience of a special characteristic of our common place of origin behind the sense of kinship among the members of our family-cum-community?

Might there be a possibility of discerning the hazy outlines of a *genius loci* beneath all these spatially defined layers of memory?

1.1. Memory, place, and *genius Londinii*

The subject of this study is the role of memory in the formation, recognition, and function of *genius loci* in the novels of four London authors: in Peter Ackroyd's *The House of Doctor Dee* (1993), *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (1994), and *Three Brothers* (2013), in Maureen Duffy's *Capital* (1975), in Michael Moorcock's *Mother London* (1988), and in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000). My analysis of the novels is premised on the proposition that in order to come into contact with the spirit of a certain place, we need to examine the crossroads of place and memory in its different forms. More precisely, my interest lies in the borderland where the *social* and *spatial* frameworks of memory begin to overlap and even amalgamate, for I see this borderland as a fertile seedbed for the germination and growth of an urban *genius loci*. Approaching this conceptual frontier from the direction of literary research, I argue that the aforementioned process shows in the novels under analysis as well. My thesis is that the novels illuminate how, especially in an urban environment, we become exposed to the workings of *genius loci* through the interaction of collective memory and individual place memories — the former depending more on our social environment and the latter premised primarily on individual experience of the interaction between spatial phenomena and human memory.

Of course, *memory* and *place* are both extremely complex and multifaceted concepts. In their coexisting clarity and obscurity, they seem to overwhelm anyone venturing near them with an academic dissecting scalpel in hand. The corpus of texts produced on both subjects in various disciplines

is huge and varied, and the ambiguity of the concepts is reflected in the way in which the boundaries between disciplines seem to shift and blur during discussion. Moreover, the concept of *genius loci* is naturally no exception in this tribe of conceptual amoebas.

Thus, the central interpretive concept of my dissertation, *genius loci*, is strongly interdisciplinary, having together with a closely related concept, *sense of place*, inspired scholars in various fields of study. Over the last decades, the idea of a *spirit* or *sense of place* has been discussed especially in the field of humanistic geography and by the phenomenological philosophers of place. However, it has also pervaded other disciplines in the humanities as well as in the social sciences. In this study, I shall mainly approach the subject via the ideas of phenomenologically disposed humanistic geography and environmental psychology, yet staying in the context of literary research.

If the concepts of place, memory, and *genius loci* appear overwhelming, the same could also be said about London, the city that has “all that life can afford” (Boswell 1979, 233).¹ The abundance of London literature written during the past centuries — and even millennia — feels almost suffocating in its variety, as does the profusion of academic research done on the subject. Yet, the deep historical reach and the rich literary canon of the city are also its main allurements. Although there are many other fascinating literary cities as well, in the Anglophone world London is — due to its long history and its status as the capital of the former British Empire — by far the

¹ For the information of those who are not yet tired of London clichés, let us recall the whole paragraph from James Boswell’s *The Life of Johnson* where Boswell describes a conversation between himself and Samuel Johnson: “I suggested a doubt, that if I were to reside in London, the exquisite zest with which I relished it in occasional visits might go off, and I might grow tired of it. JOHNSON. ‘Why, Sir, you find no man, at all intellectual, who is willing to leave London. No, Sir, when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford.’” (Boswell 1979, 233.)

most intriguing as a research subject. Furthermore, despite the plentifulness of novels, essays, plays, and poetry having London as their mise-en-scène, there is a great deal of variety in their relationships to explicit questions about place and in the degree to which they focus on matters of memory and place.

Naturally, the richness and variety of the London literary canon would allow a multitude of different corpus selections. Thus, to narrow down the choice, I have decided to focus on novels written during the last four decades around the turn of the millennium, the earliest of the novels (*Capital*) being published in 1975 and the last one (*Three Brothers*) in 2013. Concentrating on contemporary fiction also enables the inclusion of immigrant literature, which offers interesting new perspectives on questions of memory, place, and *genius loci*. I have also based my choice of novels on the fact that in all of them, London is given a prominent role both narratively and thematically. Yet, the novels under discussion are of course not the only ones fulfilling these requirements, and thus, choosing the novels to be included in the corpus has obviously resulted in some noteworthy and perhaps judgeable omissions. One objective was to select both male and female authors, which resulted in my trading of Iain Sinclair — originally included in my shortlist of eligible London authors — for Maureen Duffy, whose *Capital* also afforded an intriguing archaeological metaphor for the theme of immemorial collective memory. The objective of gender balance also made me settle on Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* when considering a suitable representative of immigrant London literature. Furthermore, the thematic division of the study was another important factor in the selection of the corpus. Accordingly, Peter Ackroyd's *The House of Doctor Dee* seemed to me as a perfect pair for Duffy's *Capital* for the discussion of immemorial London, whereas Michael Moorcock's *Mother London* and Ackroyd's *Dan Leno* addressed the thematics of the threatened city from

suitably differing viewpoints. Lastly, even at the risk of oversaturating the material with Ackroyd's London, I discovered in his *Three Brothers* an interesting proving ground for my hypotheses concerning the role of place attachment in the formation of *genius loci*.

I have based my choice of novels on the fact that in all of them, London is given a prominent role both narratively and thematically. Of the four authors, Peter Ackroyd (b. 1949) is probably best known for his enthusiasm for London as well as for his emphasis on both the influence of the past and the power of place. Moreover, his knowledge and use of English cultural and literary history in his novels, biographies, histories, and poetry make his work a rewarding subject for analysis. In addition to being the author originally responsible for my getting hopelessly lost in the labyrinthine streets and alleys of literary London far back in the 1990s, he was also the primary subject of the initial early drafts of my dissertation, which partly accounts for his dominance in the present corpus. As for Maureen Duffy (b. 1933), her oeuvre is equally broad and varied, ranging from poetry via prose fiction and non-fiction to drama, and for her, too, London has been an important narrative element in her work, especially in her novels *Wounds* (1969), *Capital*, and *Londoners* (1983) — occasionally also referred to as her “London trilogy” (Wolfreys 2004, 84). As for Michael Moorcock (b. 1939), he is known mostly as a prolific science fiction and fantasy author. However, since the 1980s Moorcock has also excelled as a writer of more literary fiction, such as his London-based *Mother London* (1988), its sequel *King of the City* (2000), and a collection of short stories entitled *London Bone* (2001). A fascination with the history — both real and legendary — of the capital unites these three authors, and the manner in which they have approached the historical strata of the city makes their work fruitful material for research on the connections between place and memory and on the role of memory in the production of *genius Londinii*.

The last author on my list, Zadie Smith (b. 1975), differs from the other three authors not only by her age but also by her half-Jamaican background. She represents the manifold voices of immigrant and post-colonial London writing — and also its consecutive generations. Although she herself belongs to the younger, London-born generation of post-colonial immigrant writers, her award-winning debut novel *White Teeth* has a multi-generational gallery of characters, including immigrants from both the Caribbean and the Asian colonies of the former British Empire.

1.2. Theoretical background and previous research

Although I am neither a humanistic geographer nor a sociologist nor an environmental psychologist but, instead, a student of literature, I shall, however, utilize the theoretical apparatuses of the aforementioned disciplines as navigational instruments throughout my study.

The first of these disciplines, *humanistic geography*, emerged in the 1970s as a response to the general positivism of mainstream geography. Existentialism and especially phenomenology belong to its theoretical framework and its central themes are an individual's experience of place and the meanings and emotions he or she attaches to places and localities. For humanistic geographers (Yi-Fu Tuan, Edward Relph) and the phenomenological philosophers of place (Edward Casey, David Seamon), place is thus predominantly a subjectively experienced location, to which we become attached and upon which we may build our identity. *Genius loci*, a special spirit or character of place, is a central concept for humanistic geographers. The phenomenological approach of humanistic geography has

also benefited place-centred research in other disciplines, including humanistic studies such as art history and film studies. Because of the emphasis it places on subjective experience, humanistic geography offers effective analytical tools for literary research as well.

Memory is the other interdisciplinary concept of this study, ever more enthusiastically discussed and explored in various fields of study. In my dissertation, I shall lean on a few main modes and metaphors of memory in assessing the impact of memory on the formation of *genius Londinii* in the novels under research. The three partly interconnected key idioms — *inscription*, *spatial metaphors*, and *body memory* — form a triad around which memory discourse has revolved since antiquity. Another important theme of this study is the influence of *collective memory*, a speciality of sociology, which also has its links to the three main mnemonic images mentioned above and is discussed especially in chapters 4, 6, and 7. A further special case is the field of trauma and memory studies, which provides support for the discussion on the suffering city in chapter 6.

As for the role of environmental psychology in the theoretical toolbox of this study, with its integration of the spheres of memory and place for the uses of place attachment studies, environmental psychology provides potent tools for the analysis of London as a place of growth in chapters 5 and 7.

The study of urban literature has gradually become an important sub-species of literary studies — a development which naturally reflects the current global rate of urbanization. This trend has concerned a few select metropolises in particular (Ameel 2016, 12), and thus, as already mentioned above, the profusion of London literature is only rivalled by the amount of academic research written on the subject, both in the form of more general overviews and in studies on individual London authors.

An essential study on the subject is Julian Wolfreys's three-volume selective exploration of the urban text from William Blake to the turn of the millennium, *Writing London* (1998, 2004, and 2007). In addition to Wolfreys, the different historical epochs of London writing have been studied by several scholars. As for studies focusing exclusively on post-war and contemporary London literature, Lawrence Phillips's *London Narratives: Post-war Fiction and the City* (2006) and Sebastian Groes's *The Making of London: London in Contemporary Literature* (2011) investigate, respectively, the images and narratives as well as the languages and voices of post-war literary London. Ged Pope's *Reading London's Suburbs: From Charles Dickens to Zadie Smith* (2015) adds a fresh perspective to the subject of London literature by looking at it from the suburban point of view. In addition, Merlin Coverley's concise overview of "essential" London literature, *London Writing* (2005) introduces a few lesser-known London authors as well.

Important further contributions to the field are the many thematically oriented studies, such as Christine Wick Sizemore's *A Female Vision of the City: London in the Novels of five British Women* (1989), which examines the urban vision of such already iconic twentieth-century female authors as Doris Lessing, Margaret Drabble, Iris Murdoch, P. D. James, and Maureen Duffy. Particularly interesting from the perspective of the present study are the analyses of the literary uses of the Second World War and its effect on London and Londoners. Of these, Sara Wasson's *Urban Gothic of the Second World War: Dark London* (2010) explores Gothic elements in wartime London literature, whereas Paul Crosthwaite's study on the aftermath of war in Anglo-American postmodernist fiction — *Trauma, Postmodernism, and the Aftermath of World War II* (2009) — also includes a chapter discussing Michael Moorcock's *Mother London* and its use of stream of con-

sciousness as a reflection of the traumatizing experience of war. Furthermore, as Sara Wasson (2010, 3) herself also notes, an intriguing phenomenon is the proliferation of all kinds of Gothics in the literary London research, from Victorian Gothic via the Gothic of war to neo-Victorian Gothic. As it happens, the theme of urban Gothic will make a few short appearances on the pages of the present study as well.

In a globalizing world, an increasing trend in any kind of humanistic research is the effect of migration and delocalization, and here the study of London literature is no exception. The theme will be discussed on the pages of this study as well. Essential texts on postcolonial London literature include Sukhdev Sandhu's *London Calling: How Black and Asian Writers Imagined a City* (2003), John McLeod's *Postcolonial London: Rewriting the Metropolis* (2004), John Clement Ball's *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis* (2004), and Ashley Dawson's *Mongrel Nation: Diasporic Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (2007).

Of the individual authors discussed on the following pages, Peter Ackroyd has probably been the most heavily studied, inspiring an abundance of both articles and monographs over the past couple of decades. In that regard, the situation has changed enormously since my first settling on his novels as a subject of research. Important contributions to the field of Ackroydology include Susana Onega's *Metafiction and Myth in the Novels of Peter Ackroyd* (1999), Jeremy Gibson's and Julian Wolfreys's *Peter Ackroyd: The Ludic and Labyrinthine Text* (2000), Barry Lewis's *My Words Echo Thus: Possessing the Past in Peter Ackroyd* (2007), and most recently Petr Chalupský's *A Horror and a Beauty: The World of Peter Ackroyd's London Novels* (2016). The reasons for the popularity of his work as a research subject probably lie in both the volume and the idiosyncratic character of his work.

1. Introduction

Maureen Duffy's work has been studied by several literary London scholars as part of more comprehensive analyses on London literature, for instance by Christine Wick Sizemore (1989), Julian Wolfreys (2004), Merlin Coverley (2005), Lawrence Phillips (2006), and Sebastian Groes (2011). However, there are as yet no monograph-length studies on her work, a situation which hopefully will change in the future.

At present, Mark Scroggins's *Michael Moorcock. Fiction, Fantasy and the World's Pain* (2016) is the most comprehensive introduction to Moorcock's vast and genre-hopping oeuvre. In addition, his London novels — especially *Mother London*, "his single greatest achievement" (Scroggins 2016, 109) — have been studied by several literary London scholars, for instance by Wolfreys (2004), Phillips (2006), and Groes (2011), and *Mother London* has also been discussed from the viewpoint of war and trauma by Paul Crosthwaite (2009), Jean-Michel Ganteau (2011), and Christoph Houswitschka (2015).

As for Zadie Smith, since the publication of *White Teeth* in 2000, her work has attracted research in abundance. *White Teeth* in particular has been the subject of several article-length studies and master's theses, as well as the focus of Sylvia Hadjetian's *Multiculturalism and Magic Realism in Zadie Smith's Novel White Teeth: Between Fiction and Reality* (2015).

Concerning more general research on the relationship between various pairings of place, memory, and literature, Leonard Lutwack's *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984), Robert M. Dainotto's *Place in Literature: Regions, Cultures, Communities* (2000), and Wesley A. Kort's *Place and Space in Modern Fiction* (2004) explore the relationship of place/space and literature, as does Harri Veivo's doctoral thesis *The Written Space* (2001) — albeit from a more semiotic viewpoint. Eric Prieto's *Literature, Geography, and the Postmodern Poetics of Place* (2013) also discusses the perspective of humanistic geography and phenomenological studies of place, whereas

Suzanne Nalbantian's *Memory in Literature: From Rousseau to Neuroscience* (2004) explores the connections of memory and literature in the light of the developments in neuroscience. Dylan Trigg's *The Memory of Place: A Phenomenology of the Uncanny* (2011) and Janet Donohoe's *Remembering Places: A Phenomenological Study of the Relationship between Memory and Place* (2014) investigate the crossroads of memory and place from a phenomenological perspective.

My study builds on this dual background of literary London studies on the one hand and the research into the shared domain of place, memory, and literature on the other, thus adding a new perspective in the study of London literature via the interdisciplinary interpretive concept of *genius loci* — here presenting itself in the form of *genius Londinii*.

1.3. On the contents of the study

In the next two chapters, I shall elucidate the theoretical foundation of my research, focusing on both *place* and *memory*. Chapter 2 focuses on various perceptions of *place* in the history of philosophy and other disciplines. My main interest lies in the significance of place for the humanistic geographers — especially Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph — and the phenomenologists of place — mainly Edward Casey and David Seamon — whose ideas about place as a universal part of the human condition amalgamate phenomenological and geographical views on place and its significance. The third major concept of this study, *genius loci*, will also be introduced in the first chapter, to be defined further, in a more in-depth manner, in the following chapters.

In chapter 3, the stage is given over to *memory* and its various modes and metaphors, especially the spatial and inscriptive metaphors of

memory, and the motifs of body memory and collective memory. Edward Casey's observations on remembering will guide the discussion in this chapter, as will the pioneering work of Maurice Halbwachs and his followers regarding the concept of collective memory.

The ensuing four chapters — “Immemorial place”, “Nurtured by place”, “The spirit of the suffering city”, and “Displaced memories” — constitute the analytical core of the dissertation. They are organized thematically to expose the formation and function of *genius Londinii* in the novels under analysis from different angles, varying in the interrelationship of place and memory and the impact of individual versus collective perspective. The first three chapters of this part focus on the novels of Peter Ackroyd, Maureen Duffy, and Michael Moorcock, examining the evolution of *genius loci* in a city with immemorial layers of past, in a city serving as a place of growth, and in a city affected by the trauma of a collective crisis. The fourth chapter of this part — “Displaced memories” — rounds off the analysis by focusing on the spirit of the city from the perspective of London's substantial immigrant population and, along with a thematic reading of Zadie Smith's novel, discusses the feasibility of the main premise of this study in defining *genius Londinii* when personal or collective memories — or both — lie elsewhere.

The last, concluding chapter of the study summarizes the results of the preceding chapters, analysing the significance of place and memory in urban writing and evaluating the role of memory in the production of a special character of place, aka *genius loci*.

—2— Place

A place is a space which has a distinct character.
— Christian Norberg-Schulz: *Genius Loci*

2.1. The irreplaceable place

Why this point of view? Why place? Why focus on something that seems so obvious? Exactly because it is obvious — and because we often ignore it in spite of its obviousness. Place is an inseparable part of our lives, whether we are aware of it or not. In fact, we often tend to be unaware of the ubiquitous role of place in our existence. As geographer Edward Relph (1980, 6) notes, although we “live, act and orient ourselves in a world that is richly and profoundly differentiated into places, [- -] we seem to have a meagre understanding of the constitution of places and the ways in which we experience them.” Still, this meagre understanding does not vitiate the fact that we are fundamentally “geographical beings” (Sack 1997, 1):

We humans are geographical beings transforming the earth
and making it into a home, and that transformed world affects

who we are. Our geographical nature shapes our world and ourselves. Being geographical is inescapable – we do not have to be conscious of it. (Ibid.)

However, if we are not necessarily always conscious of our attachment to place, much less can we be conscious of what it is like to be *without* place, due to our lives being “so place-oriented and place-saturated” that the idea of “sheer placelessness” is nearly impossible for us to comprehend (Casey 1997, ix). This inability to imagine placelessness then again attests to the tight bond between place and ourselves. Placeness is as deeply rooted in us as we are rooted in place, for “we are tied to place undetachably and without reprieve” (Casey 1993, xiii). Place is something we could not do without (Casey 1997, ix; see also Norberg-Schulz 1980, 6 and Trigg 2011, 30).

Our special geographical characteristic (cf. Sack 1997, 1) also points to the bidirectional relationship between us and place. We cultivate the soil and shape the face of the earth, but at the same time, the land also affects us, both on the level of concrete effects and on that of more intangible influences (Malpas 1999, 1–2). The probability and the extent of these reverse influences have been central issues in Western thought since antiquity (Glacken 1967, vii). Thus, in the history of geography, differing views have emerged regarding the degree and importance of environmental influence as well as the validity of the controversial idea of environmental determinism. However, despite this dissent, the actual existence of a relationship between man and his environment is seldom questioned. (Cresswell 2004, 17; *HG*, 236–238, 252, 296.) The characteristics of our culture may not be a straightforward response to particular environmental imperatives, as the proponents of environmental determinism have maintained,

yet the connection between man and place certainly remains close.² Instead of existing in a void, we live and work in places. Although we may occasionally consider a certain place insignificant for us, in general the places we occupy function as the base for both individual and collective identity, for places “are often profound centres of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties” (Relph 1980, 141; see also Trigg 2011, 31). We are, in one word, “placelings” (Casey 1996, 19; Escobar 2001, 143).

Nevertheless, the centrality of place for human existence has not always been perceived as unquestionably axiomatic. In fact, place has undergone a temporary devaluation and has only recently begun to recover from this marginalization (Escobar 2001, 140). The undervaluation of place has occurred in several disciplines, such as philosophy, anthropology, and the social sciences (ibid., Agnew 1989, *passim*). Even in the field of geography — where place is conventionally considered as occupying a focal position — there have been phases when other concepts have been enthroned as more relevant (Cresswell 2004, 15–51). The exact causes for this devaluation tend to vary from discipline to discipline, but in general, the marginalization of place is partly related to the modern condition, where such phenomena as globalization, mobility, migration, refugeedom, and the new

² The idea of environmental and climatic influence on human culture and behaviour has its roots in antiquity, and during later centuries it emerged several times, perhaps most famously in Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of the Laws* (*De l’esprit de lois*, 1748), where Montesquieu suggests that by proper legislation the possible adverse effects of climate on human character and behaviour can be minimized. (MONTESQUIEU, Charles de Secondat, *baron de*, 1989: *The Spirit of the Laws*. Translated by Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller, and Harold Stone. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.) In the field of geography, environmental determinism thrived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Germany, Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904) was an influential figure, whose ideas — especially the concept of *Lebensraum* — were later misused by the Nazi regime for its own purposes. (BA, s.v. “Geography”, “Friedrich Ratzel”; HG, 133–134, 252; Martin 2005, 167–171, 184, 364.)

information technologies seem to erode place and its significance (Escobar 2001, 141; Cresswell 2004, 43). Although we may find the existential state of “sheer placelessness” incomprehensible, still on some levels “a sense of atopia seems to have settled in” (Escobar 2001, 140). The world has become increasingly homogenized as multinational companies extend their tentacles around the globe and various cultural products and customs find their way onto new soils as people travel and move across continents and oceans — either voluntarily or by force (Cresswell 2004, 43, 54; Massey 1993, 61–62). In addition to homogenization, the world also seems to have shrunk, due to new means of telecommunication and the possibilities of fast and inexpensive travelling — an experience to which geographer David Harvey (2000, *passim*) has referred with the concept “time-space compression”.³ The homogenization of the contemporary world has even brought about the emergence of “non-places” (Augé 1995, *passim*), i.e., transient and impersonal places marked by mobility and transition, such as airport lounges, supermarkets, or motorways.⁴

Indeed, place appears to have been losing out to the various prevailing processes of the modern world. Still, paradoxically, as the homogenization

³ Robert David Sack (1997, 9–10) writes about the “thinning out” of places and their meaning, as space becomes compartmentalized and a process of “geographical partitioning and specialization” takes place, and at the same time inhabitants of different regions become globally connected.

⁴ Although the processes of globalization and homogenization have accelerated particularly during the past two decades, in part due to the impact of the Internet, the modern condition of placelessness was insightfully analysed already in the 1970s by Edward Relph. Relph (1980, 90) defines placelessness as “a weakening of the identity of places to the point where they not only look alike but feel alike and offer the same bland possibilities for experience”. As its central causes, Relph (*ibid.*) lists “mass communications, mass culture”, and “big business”. For Relph, tourism is one of the main culprits of the evolution of placelessness, inflicting “the destruction of the local and regional landscape [- -] and its replacement by conventional tourist architecture and synthetic landscapes and pseudo-places” (*ibid.*, 93). At its worst, it promotes the museumization, Disneyfication, and futurization of places (*ibid.*, 93–105).

of culture apparently seems to have evoked a general erasure of place, it has also helped to put renewed focus back on place. The critique of place in various disciplines has also brought about new perspectives and a possibility for a deeper understanding of its significance. Place has begun to find new defenders, and fairly so, for despite its ostensible downgrade, place continues to be vital for individuals and cultures alike:

Yet the fact remains that place continues to be important in the lives of many people, perhaps most, if we understand by place the experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however, unstable), sense of boundaries (however, permeable), and connection to everyday life, even if its identity is constructed, traversed by power, and never fixed. (Escobar 2001, 140.)

2.2. Delineating place

What exactly is place, then? Basically, place as a concept seems to be so self-evident that we normally do not problematize it. It “seems to speak for itself” (Cresswell 2004, 1). Accordingly, we tend to regard *place* as an uncomplicated idea, in no need of further clarification. However, despite the straightforward everyday use of the word, *place* is an intricate notion, requiring closer scrutiny. Perhaps a little paradoxically, particularly the apparent simplicity of the concept is also an indication of its intricacy because it attests to the extent of our entanglement with place. Place is not a simple environmental element but, instead, a “profound and complex aspect of man’s experience of the world” (Relph 1980, 1).

Edward Casey (1997, x) sees this ostensible and deceptive plainness of place as the central reason why the history of the concept and the debates around it have tended to sink into oblivion: “[J]ust because place is so much

with us, and we with it, it has been taken for granted, deemed not worthy of separate treatment". We are "implaced beings" and therefore in no need of analysing this self-explanatory state of affairs — or, at least, that is what we appear to think (ibid.).

The usual procedure when determining a proper definition of a word is to look at the dictionary. With *place*, one is spoilt for choice. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives us nineteen different definitions under the entry for *place*. "Senses relating to space or location" would seem to be the most evident option but, even there, definitions range confusingly from "space [- -]; continuous or unbounded extension in every direction" to "a particular part or region of space; [- -] a location". Clearly, Casey (1997, x) is right in writing about the "deceptive plainness of place".

2.2.1. Place = location + locale + sense of place

John Agnew has described place as having three essential geographical elements, which combine "both the particular qualities of a place and its situatedness in terrestrial space": *location*, *locale*, and *sense of place* (Agnew 2002, 16). Of these three, *location* refers to the fixed and objective co-ordinates that link a place to wider networks and mark its bearings in relation to other places (Agnew 1987, 5, 28, 231; Agnew 1989, 2; Agnew 2002, 16). Thus, place as a location is an answer to the question "where?" This is also the most common meaning of place in everyday language (Cresswell 2004, 7).⁵ As for *locale*, it denotes the "geographical area encompassing the settings for social interaction" (Agnew 1987, 28; see also Agnew 1989, 2; Ag-

⁵ Susanne Langer has argued that location in the sense of exact cartographic co-ordinates is only a subsidiary quality of place for "a ship constantly changing its location is nonetheless a self-contained place". (LANGER, Susanne 1953: *Feeling and Form*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 95)

new 2002, 16). In other words, locale provides the concrete setting for individual lives and social relations (ibid.). Locale as a necessary constituent of place also implies that places are material things — even when they are imaginary like a setting of a novel (Cresswell 2004, 7). The last of the elements, *sense of place*, refers to both the symbolic identification with and the emotional attachment to place, often engendered by living in that place (Agnew 1987, 28; Agnew 1989, 2; Agnew 2002, 16; Cresswell 2004, 7). A symbolic identification with a place necessitates that the place in question is felt to be essential in the formation of personal identity (Agnew 2002, 16). In this case, one could also speak of a “territorial identity” (Agnew 1989, 2).⁶

Agnew’s tripartite definition of place corresponds to our common understanding of the concept. These three elements emerge regularly in popular and academic discussions about place, either jointly or separately (Agnew 2002, 16). Yet, in order to comprehend place more fully, it is necessary to briefly examine its relations with two kindred concepts — space and landscape — which have occasionally even been substituted for place. Setting place against these concepts aids in the delineation of place, as the other concepts may be seen either as opposing or as complementary to the definition of place. However, strict boundaries cannot always be drawn. The definitions of place and its two cognate concepts, space and landscape, tend to overlap and have confusingly shifting forms (see also *HG*, 14).

⁶ The term *sense of place* is often used interchangeably with the term *spirit of place*. However, there is an essential difference between these two concepts, which I shall elucidate in more detail in chapter 2.3.

2.2.2. Place vs. space

Throughout the history of Western philosophy, *place* has always duelled with *space* — only to be defeated for most of the time. The assimilation of *place* to *space* prevailed through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance until seventeenth-century physics tilted the balance, *time* joining *space* in the subordination of *place* from the eighteenth century on (Casey 1993, *passim*; Casey 1997, *passim*). Edward Casey's (1997, x) equation of space with "a cosmic and extracosmic Moloch that consumes every corpuscle of place to be found within its greedy reach" felicitously illustrates the crucial difference between place and space: the latter is usually seen as a "general or unlimited extent" (*OED*; s.v. "*space*", n.1, II), whereas place is considered as a "particular part or region of space; a physical locality, a locale; a spot, a location" (*OED*; s.v. "*place*", n. 1, II, 5a; see also Donohoe 2014, 10).⁷ Thus, space is seen as pre-existent to place (see also Merleau-Ponty 2002, 283–284).

However, the relationship of space and place may as well be seen the other way around, defining space as posterior to place (Casey 1996, 16). Especially in the field of phenomenological philosophy, this has become the established hierarchy of the two concepts, showing in various texts influenced by phenomenology, regardless of their parent discipline. From this perspective, space is seen merely as relational, as a "set of relations between things or places" (Tilley 1994, 17). When space is thus assessed as being produced and created by the objects and places it encloses, it be-

⁷ However, there are also some inconsistencies in the dictionary definitions of these two words. For instance, one of the definitions for *place* in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is "room, available space; also: a space that can be occupied" (*OED*, s.v. "*place*", n.1, II, 3a), whereas *space* is also defined as "extent or area sufficient for a purpose, action, etc.; room to contain or do something" (*ibid.*, s.v. "*space*", n.1, II, 7b).

comes a secondary element. Yet, even if space were to be deemed as constituted by places, it still affects those places and their mutual relations, resulting in a reciprocity between space and place (ibid.).

However, regardless of the hypothetical and vacillating ontological hierarchy of space and place, there seems to be no great disagreement over the way they relate to each other in terms of geographical scale. Most academics concur with the dictionaries in defining space as extensive and intangible, whereas for them, too, place signifies location, a certain point inside the vast and amorphous space. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (2001, 6) uses a motile metaphor to describe their interrelationship: "If we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause."

Ergo, space is commonly seen as a more abstract concept than place. As Tilley (1994, 15) formulates, clearly echoing Relph (1980), space "provides a situational context for places, but derives its meanings from particular places." Space itself is "amorphous and intangible" (Relph 1980, 8), and, thus, when trying to explain it, we inevitably come into contact with the concept of place.

Occasionally, the concepts are considered as synonymous or, instead of *place*, the phrase "particular space" is used (Agnew 2002, 15). However, there still exists a certain tension between these two concepts and this tension can be taken as an indication of their distinctiveness (ibid.). Whichever way their mutual hierarchy is seen, space is typically presented as an empty extensiveness, whereas place points to pause and location. Still, these two concepts necessitate each other: "From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa" (Tuan 2001, 6; see also Donohoe 2014, 10).

2.2.3. Place vs. landscape

Landscape is another term sometimes competing with place in discussions concerning our relationship with our environment. The word itself usually carries our minds either to an impressive vantage point above an eye-appealing terrain or to the front of imposing paintings on the walls of an art museum housing the best specimens of the artistic heritage of its home country. This was also the primary denotation of the word from the late sixteenth century on, when the word was first introduced to English from Dutch, mainly as a technical term used by painters (*OED*, s.v. “landscape”; Schama 1996, 10; Williams 1975, 122; James 1934, 78–79 n. 1).

The foundation of the word lies in the encounter of the land and its inhabitants: the Dutch *landschap* originally signified a district occupied and administered by men, i.e. an administrative territory or a jurisdiction (Andrews 1999, 28–29; James 1934, 78–79 n.1; Lippard 1997, 8; Schama 1996, 10). Similarly, the Romance languages have their own equivalents, all deriving from the Latin word *pagus*, which signifies a “defined rural district” (Jackson 1984, 5). Logically, a certain, clearly defined administrative unit of land would have been a suitable subject for the landowner’s commission to a painter. However, although the pride of the landowner in his estate might have motivated some of the early Flemish and Dutch landscape paintings, in most of the Dutch *landschaps* of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the local scenes were the primary subject matter, depicted purely for their own sake and seen for the first time in the history of Western art as a theme of their own (Casey 2002, 3–5; Honour and Fleming 2005, 595). The visuo-aesthetic character of the term also manifests itself in the dictionary definitions of *landscape*: *view*, *prospect*, *scenery*, and *vista* are commonly given as synonyms, all of them carrying allusions to the sense of vision in their lexical roots (*OED*, s.v. “landscape”).

Thus, as an “aesthetically processed” land (Andrews 1999, 7), landscape is strongly connected with vision and the visual arts. Although a landscape — as “a view or prospect of natural inland scenery” (*OED*, s.v. “landscape”) — can also be represented literarily, the concept is still “intensely visual” (Cosgrove 1998, 9; see also Creswell 2004, 10). The visuality of landscape means that the position of the viewer is always *outside* the landscape, and as Tim Cresswell (*ibid.*) notes, this is the primary difference between landscape and place: “Places are very much things to be inside of” (see also Malpas 2011, 9).⁸ Lucy Lippard (1997, 7–8), too, recognizes this fundamental distinction: “A lived-in landscape becomes a place, which implies intimacy; a once-lived-in landscape can be a place, if explored, or remain a landscape, if simply observed”. Consequently, a landscape does not become a place until it is separated from its frame and wrapped around the spectator to be felt and lived in, because a landscape is always “seen rather than felt” (*ibid.*).

Denis E. Cosgrove (1998, 19) discusses basically the same distinction when he highlights the difference between, on the one hand, a landscape as seen from the outside by an external observer and a landscape as experienced by the insider-participant on the other. For the “existential insider”, landscape is “a dimension of existence, collectively produced, lived and maintained” (*ibid.*). Cosgrove is here quoting Edward Relph, for whom “[e]xistential insideness characterizes belonging to a place and the deep

⁸ Cresswell (2004, 10) illustrates the fundamental difference between the two concepts, landscape and place, with a literary example, Raymond Williams’ novel *Border Country* (1960). Its protagonist, Matthew Price, returns after many years from London to his childhood home valley in the Welsh borders and notices that, for him, the region has transformed from a place to a landscape — in other words, he has become an outsider, a visitor seeing the valley from far away, instead of feeling the valley and the village as a lived-in place. Later in the novel, Matthew gets back “inside” the life of the village, and, consequently, the landscape again becomes a place for him.

and complete identity with a place that is the very foundation of the place concept" (Relph 1980, 55). Accordingly, place indeed appears to be a more apposite term for a landscape experienced from the inside (Cosgrove 1998, 19).

Still, despite the essential differences between place and landscape, the usages of the two words sometimes tend to overlap. Thus, definitions of landscape occasionally resemble those of place and its association with memory and human experience, as when historian Simon Schama describes landscape as "the work of mind", built "as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock" (Schama 1996, 7). From this standpoint, landscape becomes the production of human consciousness, "our shaping perception" thus transforming "raw matter" into landscape⁹ (ibid., 10). Although the mention of a "shaping perception" in connection with landscape once again seems to lead our thoughts towards the sense of vision, this approach to the idea of landscape actually obscures the boundary between landscape and place, so conveniently assigned to the visual bias of the former. Thus, Schama's *Landscape and Memory* (1995), too, declares

⁹ The idea of landscape as a projection of the viewer's consciousness has been discussed by other writers as well. For instance, in his personal survey of the history of mountaineering, Robert Macfarlane notes that "[w]e attribute qualities to landscape which it does not intrinsically possess – savageness, for example, or bleakness – and we value it accordingly. We *read* landscapes, in other words, we interpret their forms in the light of our own experience and memory, and that of our shared cultural memory." (MACFARLANE, Robert 2008: *Mountains of the Mind. The History of a Fascination*. London: Granta. 18; his italics.)

itself to be “*an excavation below our conventional sight-level to recover the veins of myth and memory that lie beneath the surface*” (14; my italics).¹⁰

However, although Schama’s mythic and mnemonic landscape bears a certain resemblance to place, the way he focuses on the elements of nature — wood, water, and rock — justifies his using the word landscape. Dictionary definitions of landscape often stress the word “natural”, even when mentioning the possibility of different processes that might have contributed to the shape of the land. For example, “a tract of land with its distinguishing characteristics and features, esp. considered as a product of modifying or shaping processes and agents (usually natural)” is a sub-definition of the word in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED; s.v. “landscape”).¹¹ Nevertheless, these modifying agents are not necessarily always natural, and thus the term landscape can also be used of a purely man-made environment, such as a city — *townscape* or *cityscape* being the words often used when referring to an urban landscape. For instance, John Brinckerhoff Jackson (e.g. 1994, passim) foregrounds the importance of human impact on the formation of landscape through history. For him, the various details and elements of a “civilized landscape” serve as symbols and roads and ruins are as integral a part of a landscape as rivers and rocks — if not even more so (ibid., viii). Jackson’s own explicit definition of the word also includes the human element:

Landscape is a space on the surface of the earth; intuitively we know that it is a space with a degree of permanence, with its own distinct character, either topographical or cultural, and

¹⁰ Cosgrove (1998, xxvii) highlights the same quotation from Schama and notes that Schama’s work is an effective argument for the “continued social relevance of landscape as an expression of environmental relations beyond the purely visual”.

¹¹ Tim Ingold (1993, 153) begins his definition of *landscape* by elucidating what it is not: “It is not ‘land’, it is not ‘nature’, and it is not ‘space’”. (INGOLD, Tim 1993: The temporality of the landscape. *World Archaeology*. 25, no. 2. 152-174.)

above all a space shared by a group of people. (Jackson 1984, 5.)

Similarly, Christopher Tilley (1994, 23; his italics) emphasizes the dialectic relationship of landscape and the people inhabiting it: “the landscape is both medium *for* and outcome *of* action and previous histories of action.” Thus, landscape is not a mere neutral and natural backdrop, unaffected by human action. Instead, it is “always already fashioned by human agency, never completed, and constantly being added to” (ibid.). Still, the word generally triggers in our minds images of nature — or at least countryside — rather than urban scenery. Thus, in addition to the visual bias of the term, another important characteristic distinguishing landscape from place is that “it reminds us of our position in the scheme of nature”¹² (Cosgrove 1989, 122; his italics).

Thus, to sum up, landscape is mostly defined by its visuality and its association with nature. Furthermore, over the past centuries, the visual emphasis has dominated the use and explication of the word (Cosgrove 2003, 249). Accordingly, in humanistic studies landscape has been especially useful in the field of art history, substituting for place in analyses of the

¹² John Brinckerhoff Jackson (1984, 5; his italics) sees “a slight but noticeable difference” between the American and English usages of the word *landscape*: “We tend to think that *landscape* can mean natural scenery only, whereas in England a landscape almost always contains a human element.” How much this difference – if it really exists – stems from the differences in population densities, the ratio of cultivated land to wilderness areas, and other variables remains a topic of its own, to be discussed in another context.

significance of *genius loci* for a painter.¹³ However, as Kenneth Olwig (1996, 630–631) notes, “[l]andscape [- -] need not be understood as being either territory or scenery; it can also be conceived as a nexus of community, justice, nature, and environmental equity” — an interpretation in concord with the original sense of the Dutch *landschap*. Consequently, landscape has also proved to be a useful concept in contemporary geography and environmental studies (Cosgrove 1984, 9; Martin 2005, 175–177; Jackson 1984, *passim*).

2.2.4. The dialectical triad of place, space, and landscape

Place, space, and landscape indeed form a close-knit set of concepts, or, in W. J. T. Mitchell’s (2002, x) words, a “dialectical triad”. Each member of this triad has its own special role and function, and, although Mitchell deems none of them “logically or chronologically prior to the others”, *space* and

¹³ Ville Lukkarinen’s and Annika Waenerberg’s study of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Finnish landscape painting, *Suomi-kuvasta mielenmaisemaan* (translated as *From Finnish landscapes to mindscapes* in the summary), is a fine example of this kind of art-historical landscape research. Their approach is influenced by the ideas of humanistic geography and phenomenology, one of the chapters by Lukkarinen being specifically devoted to the idea of *genius loci* and its significance for several Finnish landscape painters of that period. Via this approach, Lukkarinen sheds new light on certain well-known paintings by two popular Finnish painters, Albert Edelfelt and Pekka Halonen. (LUKKARINEN, Ville and WÄENERBERG, Annika 2004: *Suomi-kuvasta mielenmaisemaan. Kansallismaisemat 1800- ja 1900-luvun vaihteen maalaustaiteessa*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.)

place are still often considered as more central terms, whereas *landscape* is regarded as an “aesthetic framing” of space and place (ibid., x, viii).

Although the usage of these terms is not always consistent and their definitions in different contexts may overlap, they are by no means interchangeable. Space and place in particular are sometimes used interchangeably; their denotations, however, are in certain respects almost antithetical.¹⁴ For instance, Edward Casey (2001, 683) emphasizes their disparity, defining space as “the encompassing volumetric void in which things (including human beings) are being positioned”, whereas place for him is “the immediate environment of my lived body”. Landscape, for its part, is “the presented layout of a set of places”, or even a “broadening” of place (Casey 2001, 683, 689).

Even so, Casey (2001, 689) warns us not to perceive this triad as an unbroken continuum. Although he sees landscape as a “cusp concept” marking the “most salient difference” of space and place, still, according to him, it would be too easy to think of it as an intermediate term or a passage between the other two concepts (ibid.). The openness and vastness of landscape in particular may delude us into considering it as the beginning of space; however, “it will never *become* space” but instead “remains a composition of places, their intertangled skein” (ibid., his italics).¹⁵

¹⁴ Particularly in the discourse of architectural theory and philosophy, the concepts of space and place occasionally seem to fuse and place is often perceived as existential or lived space.

¹⁵ Casey (2001, 690) considers *horizon* an important distinguishing factor between landscape and space, also marking the essential difference of space and place: “Every landscape has a horizon, yet space never does”. Although place cannot be said to have a horizon, it still has its own boundaries — only space is unlimited. Here, Casey is referring to Erwin Straus. (STRAUS, Erwin 1963: *The Primary World of Senses*. Translated by J. Needleman. New York: Free Press. Quoted in Casey 2001, 693, n. 39.)

Of this tight conceptual constellation of *place*, *space*, and *landscape*, place will be the key concept of this study. Thus, London is here approached as a location and locale with a sense of place, to quote John Agnew's tripartite definition of place. Still, being a powerful visual phenomenon as well as a clearly defined administrative unit of land, constantly shaped and altered by its inhabitants, the city can occasionally appear as a landscape as well. Moreover, by means of its architecture, its streets, alleys, edifices, and rooms, the city also presents itself to us as a megaspace, an accumulation of a myriad diverse spaces. However, when one wants to investigate *genius Londinii*, *place* is the place to start.

2.3. *Genius loci* and the experienced place

The medley of scholars quoted above attests to the fact that place is a key concept for several disciplines. Owing to our "place-oriented and place-saturated" lives (Casey 1993, ix), place must be taken into account in various fields that relate to human lives and activities. In Eric Prieto's (2013, 198) words, place "has a built-in interdisciplinary component". Consequently, place has been discussed and theorized not only in the field of geography but also, for instance, in archaeology, architecture, art history, anthropology, film studies, history, literary studies, philosophy, and theology — occasionally in the guise of either *space* or *landscape* but still in close contact with the problematics of *place*.

In the field of geography, the subjective relevance of place for an individual came under the spotlight in the early 1970s as a reaction to the positivist geography of the previous decades, which resulted in the birth of humanistic geography (Cresswell 2008, 54–55; Ley and Samuels 1978, 1). To break away from the restraints of positivism and scientific objectivity,

humanistically inclined geographers turned towards existentialism and phenomenology in order to build a theoretical framework for the new geographical school of thought (Cresswell 2008, 54). Instead of the physical characteristics of our environment, they wanted to study our subjective experience of place and the ways in which we give meaning and attach emotions to our place in the world. As a result of this existential and phenomenological perception, *space* becomes *place* through experience and *Dasein*, our *being-in-the-world*, to use Martin Heidegger's (1962, *passim*) term. "Place is security, space is freedom" (Tuan 2001, 3), and in order for the freedom of abstract space to transform into the security and stability of meaningful place, experience is needed. As experience is only created through time, time becomes an essential factor in the transformation of space to place as well. Consequently, a place can be defined as a location where both our own memories and the memories of earlier generations have accumulated through time (Tuan 1996, 455; see also Cresswell 2008, 55). Thus, instead of perceiving a place as a mere setting for our lives, we should consider places as "participants, as vibrant, living aspects of memory, tradition, history, and meaning" (Donohoe 2014, 9).

A central concept for humanistic geographers is *genius loci*, or *spirit of place*, founded on an individual or collective impression of a special character of place. Similarly to *place* and *memory*, it is another ambiguous and elusive idea. Edward Relph (1980, 48) defines the spirit of place as intangible but also immutable, something that persists:

The spirit of place that is retained through changes is subtle and nebulous, and not easily analysed in formal and conceptual terms. Yet at the same time it is naively obvious in our experience of places for it constitutes the very individuality and uniqueness of places.

Yi-Fu Tuan (1996, 444) suggests we take the term “spirit” literally, for in his view, “space is formless and profane except for the sites that ‘stand out’ because spirits are believed to dwell in them”. Thus, he leads us towards the historical roots of the concept, which has its derivation in the ancient Roman adoration of domestic spirits (Nitzsche 1975, 7). In its initial usage, the term *genius* denoted a guardian spirit, which was believed to reside in every object and place, and as a *genius loci*, it embodied the permanence and the “unifying principle” of a place (Knowlton 1928, 439; Nitzsche 1975, 7; Norberg-Schulz 1980, 18; Smith 1984, 100; Casey 2000, 197). Consequently, one had to learn to live with the spirit of the place in order to survive and thrive (Norberg-Schulz 1980, 18).¹⁶

A sibling concept is *sense of place*, which is sometimes used synonymously with the term *spirit of place*. Tuan (1996, 446), however, separates these two concepts, for although “[p]lace may be said to have ‘spirit’ or ‘personality’ [- -] only human beings can have a sense of place”. Thus, when we talk about a *sense of place* we are actually referring to our own recognition of the *spirit* — or “character” or “ambience” — of place (see also Seamon 2012, 4). Edward Relph (2009, 25) defines the difference between these two concepts along similar lines: “[S]ense of place is the faculty by which we grasp spirit of place and that allows us to appreciate differences and similarities among places”. Accordingly, to have a sense of a place is to have an experience of the *genius* of that particular place. Furthermore, by recognizing *genius loci*, we at the same time also consolidate the transformation of space to place.

¹⁶ Since the publication of Christian Norberg-Schulz’s *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* in 1979, the concept of *genius loci* has also been actively used in architectural discussion when reflecting on the relationship of a building to its environment.

According to Tuan (1996, 446), modern man “transgresses against the *genius loci* because he fails to recognize it; and he fails to recognize it because the blandness of much modern environment combined with the ethos of human dominance has stunted the cultivation of place awareness”. The bland modern environment evokes Marc Augé’s characterization of a “non-place”, produced by “supermodernity”: “a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity” (Augé 1995, 77–78). Non-places “do not integrate the earlier places” (ibid.), in other words, they are without memory, constituting a temporal and mnemonic desert where *genius loci* will inevitably face extinction.

In my analyses in the following, I thus begin from the premise that especially in an urban environment, place memory — based primarily on individual experience of the interaction between spatial phenomena and human memory — is connected with collective memory — depending more on the social environment — to produce the experience of a spirit of place. In addition, the habitual body memory acts as an important mediator in this process, as also illustrated in the novels under analysis.

—3— Memory

3.1. The momentousness of memory

In addition to *place*, the other essential component of this study is *memory*. Like *place*, memory is a strongly interdisciplinary concept, its application areas ranging from neuropsychology through sociology to cultural heritage studies. The multidisciplinary nature of memory is a logical consequence of its central position in our lives. As well as “geographical beings” (Sack 1997, 1), we are also *temporal* beings, and consequently both *place* and *memory* are vital elements in our common human experience. In order to be able to live and function in our four-dimensional universe, we need both a spatial and a temporal sense of direction, and it is memory that provides us with the latter.

Memory aids us not just in embracing the past but also in preparing for the future. Over the course of evolution, our survival has depended on our ability to store information for future recall, to remember and learn from our past experiences so as to be able to plan for future contingencies. Thus, from an evolutionary perspective, memory is in fact “inherently prospective” (Klein, Robertson, and Delton 2011, 121; see also Klein, Robertson,

and Delton 2010, *passim*). A severe amnesia robs us not only of our past but also of our future. Without memory, we are stranded by a never-ending present, unaware of the continuum of past, present, and future that could provide us with our identity (see also Trigg 2011, 71).¹⁷ An utter *mindfulness*, perhaps, which renders us pure observers so that “there is left [only] a central oyster of perceptiveness, an enormous eye”, to borrow the phrase of Virginia Woolf from her long essay “Street haunting: a London adventure” (1942). Although the narrator of Woolf’s essay does not suffer from amnesia — she is only leaving her home to saunter along the streets of London — her leaving of the “shell-like covering which our souls have excreted to house themselves, to make for themselves a shape distinct from others” is still analogous to the amnesiac’s loss of her identity along with her memory, her past — and her future (*ibid.*).¹⁸

¹⁷ Paul Ricoeur (2004, 97 and 102) credits John Locke with the “equating of identity, self and memory” in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) and defines him as “the inventor of the following three notions and the sequence that they form together: identity, consciousness, self”. (RICOEUR, Paul 2004: *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.)

¹⁸ The situation of the protagonist in S. J. Watson’s novel *Before I Go to Sleep* (2011) illustrates the significance of memory for human identity, indicated by John Locke and his followers. Christine Lucas is a middle-aged woman who has lost her memory in an accident and is able to remember only the events of the present day. When she goes to sleep at night, the memories of the day are swept away, and thus she wakes every morning without a past and has to start from scratch the task of rebuilding her identity, based on the facts her husband – or the man who presents himself to her as her husband every morning – tells her. Christine Lucas has a real-life model in the famous patient “H.M.” – a man named Henry Gustav Molaison, who lost the ability to create new memories as a result of a brain surgery intended to ameliorate his severe epilepsy. The operation included removal of most of the hippocampus, and thus Molaison’s case spurred the study of the hippocampus and its function in memory formation. (WATSON, S. J.: “Discussing *Before I Go to Sleep*”. Interview at <<http://www.sjwatson-books.com/interviews/discussing-the-book/>>, last accessed 28 April 2014.; CORKIN, Suzanne 2002: What’s new with amnesic patient H.M.? *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*. Volume 3, February 2002. 153–160.) See also footnote 21 below.

As an indispensable element of human life, memory has thus been at the centre of philosophical discourse since antiquity. However, especially towards the end of the twentieth century, memory has gradually become almost an obsession in the contemporary Western culture, manifested in the “popularity of the museum and the resurgence of the monument and the memorial” (Huyssen 1995, 3; see also Whitehead 2007, Introduction). A kindred phenomenon is the growing fascination with heritage and a sentimental longing for the past, *nostalgia*, which David Lowenthal (1985, 4) considers as equivalent to a “modern malaise”. Andreas Huyssen (1995, 7) traces the roots of this obsession with memory to the “accelerating technical processes” and the “threatening heterogeneity, non-synchronicity, and information overload” of today’s world which bring about the need for “temporal anchoring”. Lowenthal (1998, 1, 5–6) has drawn similar conclusions as to the causes of the modern “cult of the heritage” and infers that rapid and dramatic changes in almost every walk of life have engendered an acute demand for heritage as a balancing force. Anne Whitehead (2007, Introduction) adds to these causes the “popularization of the discourses of virtual memory, prosthetic memory, and the electronic memory of computers” as well as the proliferation of oral archives focusing on the memories of the common people.

Moreover, the wars and genocides of the last century have also contributed to the urgency of questions concerning memory, history, and heritage. The Holocaust in particular has brought to the fore questions concerning traumatic memories and the very possibility of reminiscence in the face of extreme suffering (Whitehead 2007, chapter 3).

Thus, the present memory boom can be perceived as merely the latest occurrence in a long sequence of debates and reflections on memory and recollection, beginning in antiquity and gaining extra momentum in the aftermath of the political and industrial revolutions of the late eighteenth

century (Whitehead 2007, Introduction).¹⁹ Despite the upheavals of the past century, there has been no actual “break in memorial consciousness” but, instead, an intensification of the memory discourse towards the end of the twentieth century (ibid., chapter 3; see also Radstone 2000, 6).

3.2. The modes and metaphors of memory

In her critical survey of the history of memory, Anne Whitehead (2007, Introduction) traces a few key “‘idioms’ of memory” that “insistently surface and resurface in Western thought”. From the perspective of a research project situated in the intersection of place, memory, and literary texts, her choice of the three most important motifs — “inscription, spatial metaphors, and ‘body memory’” — is certainly thought-provoking (ibid.). Both *inscription* and *spatial metaphors* seem highly applicable images when studying the impact of memory on the formation of a distinct spirit of place as portrayed in a few London novels. However, the third motif, *body memory*, also affords fruitful prospects, for instance for the assessment of the role of habitual behaviours in the development of a sense of place.

On the whole, these three key idioms form a triad around which memory discourse seems to have revolved since antiquity. Furthermore, the motifs are not separate from each other, but instead are interconnected in several ways. In addition to the three main motifs, there are also other useful topics that have emerged in memory discourse and which have also

¹⁹ “Memory crisis” is the term Richard Terdiman (1993, 3–4) has coined for the heightened concern with memory and past caused by the rapid changes of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as “[i]n this period, people experienced the insecurity of their culture’s involvement with its past [and] the perturbation of the link to their own inheritance”. (TERDIMAN, Richard 1993: *Present Past. Modernity and the Memory Crisis*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.)

been tied to the three “key idioms”, such as the dichotomy of *active and passive remembering*, the differences and similarities between *memory and history*, the instance of *traumatic* memories, and the role of *forgetting*. Finally, a special case for the theme of this study is the subject of *collective memory*, which also has its links to the three main mnemonic images.

Thus, the history of the concept of memory becomes an intricate nexus of partly cognate ideas, whose manifold internal relations make the delineation of a systematic account a challenging task. Thus, in the following, I shall not attempt a comprehensive review, but, instead, I will briefly discuss those motifs and topics that are particularly relevant for the study at hand. These preliminary presentations will be further developed in the ensuing chapters.

3.2.1. Memory and spatiality

Memories are motionless, and the more securely they
are fixed in space, the sounder they are.
—Gaston Bachelard: *The Poetics of Space*

For the purposes of this study, the *spatial metaphors of memory* form the most important idiom of memory. Also in the general history of memory discourse, spatial imagery has been nearly as popular as the metaphor of inscription. In effect, the inscriptive and spatial idioms have often been combined and even partly amalgamated to produce expressive metaphoric imagery.

The power of spatial imagery in matters of memory is connected to our strong attachment to place and space.²⁰ As has already been noted earlier

²⁰ The fluctuating use of the words *place* and *space* in connection with the spatial metaphors of memory reflects the inconsistencies and overlap in the general use of these terms. (See section 2.2.2. for more detailed discussion of these differences.)

in this study, we are “geographical beings” (Sack 1997, 1), “tied to place undetachably and without reprieve” (Casey 1993, xiii), and thus our memories cannot be “*unplaced*” either (ibid., 182). According to Edward Casey (ibid.), place forms the “basic stance on which every experience and its memory depend” and, consequently, “our memory of what we experience in place is likewise place-specific: it is bound to place as to its own basis”. Thus, memory is “inherently spatial” (Trigg 2011, 16). Interestingly, the strong connection between place and memory also has a neurophysiological basis in the functioning of the hippocampus — a brain structure that has an important role both in the formation of especially episodic memories and in spatial navigation (O’Keefe and Nadel 1978, *passim*, Mizumori 2006, *passim*; see also Nalbantian 2014, 135–152).²¹

The archetypal instance of the use of spatial metaphors of memory is the mnemonic place system of the art of memory, reputedly invented by the Greeks, later detailed in writing by a couple of Roman rhetors, and further cultivated during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. A central element of the *ars memoriae* was the “mnemonic of places and images”: the imprinting on the memory of a series of either real or imaginary places — for instance a street or a large house with several rooms — which could then be used as a setting for the images that represented the ideas and

²¹ The hippocampal memory system has been under extensive research since the late 1950s, and the exploration of its function has intensified since the finding in 1971 of “place cells” — i.e., hippocampal neurons that discharge according to the movement of the animal in its environment (Mizumori 2006, *passim*). See also footnote 18 above.

words to be remembered (Yates 1966, 2–3; see also *Ad Herennium*, III, xvi–xxii; Cicero 1967, II, lxxxvii; Quintilian 2006, XI, ii, 17–21).²²

The legendary first inventor of the art of memory was the Greek poet Simonides of Ceos, who was able to identify the victims killed by a collapsed banqueting hall roof on the basis of their seating positions in the hall and, consequently, realized the importance of spatial order for the proper function of memory (Yates 1966, 1–2; Cicero 1967, II, LXXXVI, 352–354). The anonymous writer of *Ad Herennium* also emphasizes the significance of the orderly arrangement of memory places as well as the value of using “striking” and “novel” memory images (*Ad Herennium*, III, xvii and xxii; Yates 1966, 7–10). Invocation of the sense of sight and an orderly setting of localities were thus key elements in the mnemonic place system of the ancient art of memory (Cicero 1967, II, lxxxvii, 357–358). Ergo, the significance of spatial context for the function of memory was already recognized in antiquity, doubtlessly from everyone’s “own experience”, as Quintilian comments on the legend of Simonides in his *Institutio oratoria*:

[F]or when we return to places, after an absence of some time, we not only recognize them, but recollect also what we did in them. Persons whom we saw there, and sometimes even thoughts that passed within our minds, recur to our memory. (Quintilian 2006, XI, ii, 17.)

²² In the three key Latin sources of *ars memoriae*, there are also examples of the occasional amalgamation of the inscriptive and spatial metaphors of memory. For instance, in *Ad Herennium*, the author compares the art of memory to an inner writing where the *loci* are “like wax tablets or papyrus” and “the images like the letters” (*Ad Herennium*, III, xvii; Yates 1966, 6–7). The *loci* or backgrounds also resemble wax tablets in their reusability: the images can be effaced from them like letters from a wax tablet and the memory places can thus be refurnished with another set of memory images (*Ad Herennium*, III, xviii).

The mnemonic practices of the Roman rhetors were developed further in the Middle Ages, from the thirteenth century on, based mainly on *Ad Herennium* — the only Latin source on the topic known to medieval scholars (Whitehead 2007, chapter 1; Yates 1966, 55, 77). During the Middle Ages, the architectural mnemonic of the ancient rhetoricians was also modified into a system in which the architectural *loci* were replaced with the idea of a tabular grid set on a page, on which the items to be remembered — normally short bits of text instead of images — were placed (Whitehead 2007, chapter 1; Carruthers 2008, 100, 156). Later, during the Renaissance, the mnemonic place system was manifested in the so-called memory theatres of the Hermetic philosophers Giulio Camillo and Robert Fludd, where the mnemonic *loci* were found, respectively, either in the auditorium or on the stage of the memory theatres (Whitehead 2007, chapter 1; Yates 1966, 129–172, 320–367).

Although in the architectural mnemonic of *ars memoriae* the association between place and memory is purely artificial, it is still a direct reflection of the way in which our spatial framework interacts with our memories. Thus, place has a “reservative role” because it contains and shelters the objects and events that are in the focus of our remembering (Casey 2000, 187–188). This trait appears to be self-evident in the case of architectural settings, yet, it operates with natural landscapes as well, when our activities “become inscribed within a landscape”, resulting in natural features transforming into familiar places (Tilley 1994, 27).²³ Moreover, this applies to both individual human beings and larger groups, and, consequently, “[a]ll locales and landscapes are therefore embedded in the social and individual times of memory” (ibid.). Thus, both manmade and natural

²³ Tilley’s use of the verb “inscribe” is a typical example of the common amalgamation of the inscriptive and spatial metaphors of memory and of the ubiquitousness of the former.

places have an important role not just in the establishment of individual memories but also in the formation of *collective memory*, which “unfolds in a spatial framework” as well (Halbwachs 1980, 140). As the connection of memory with place and spatiality is one of the central questions of this study, the topic will be discussed further in the following chapters, in connection with all the novels under analysis.

3.2.2. Memory as inscription

At that moment the equation became clear to him:
the act of writing as an act of memory.
—Paul Auster: *The Invention of Solitude*

Despite the pervasiveness of the spatial metaphors of memory, *inscription* is still probably the most popular of the three key motifs of the Western memory discourse. As Anne Whitehead (2007, Introduction) notes, the “notion of the mind as a writing surface is remarkably consistent in in the Western tradition”. Although the type of the figurative mnemonic writing surface has varied according to the evolution of actual writing materials, the different inscriptive metaphors of memory have not lost their power of expression and remain highly evocative even for the modern discourse of memory.

The metaphor of inscription has its origin in Plato’s archetypal image of mind as a wax tablet presented in his dialogue *Theaetetus* (ca 369 BCE). There Socrates discusses the nature of knowledge with Theaetetus, a young Athenian mathematician, and, in order to illustrate the imprinting of perceptions and other objects of thought into memory, Socrates compares the mind to a block of wax:

Let us say that this tablet is a gift of Memory, the mother of the Muses; and that when we wish to remember anything which

we have seen, or heard, or thought in our own minds, we hold the wax to the perceptions and thoughts, and in that material receive the impression of them as from the seal of a ring [- -]. (Plato 2008b, 191c-e.)

The quality of the wax tablet then also explains the quality and durability of memories. Problems arise if the wax tablet of the mind happens to be too dirty, hard, or soft: these defects cause the impressions to appear too indistinct or to be effaced too easily.

The image of memory as impressions of a seal was further developed by Aristotle in his short treatise *De memoria et reminiscencia* (*On Memory and Reminiscence*; 350 BCE), where the wax tablet gave way to a “receiving organ”, whose flaws influenced the quality of a person’s memory (Aristotle 2014, chapter 1). Later, the inscriptive imagery reappeared for instance in the Enlightenment discourse of memory, for example in John Locke’s metaphor of a child’s mind as a “white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas”, waiting for impressions to be printed on it (Locke 1998, 49).

Even the proliferation of other metaphorical idioms and motifs in the post-Enlightenment memory discourse has not totally eclipsed the applicability of the inscriptive imagery, and thus, the motif can be found for example in Sigmund Freud’s image of the mind as a “Mystic Writing-Pad”, whose surface sheet can be wiped clean without removing the marks from the undermost layer of wax, on which the traces will stay etched forever (Freud 2007 [1925], 115–118, Whitehead 2007; Introduction and chapter 3). The imagery of engraving also continues to be used in recent theories of trauma (Whitehead 2007, Introduction).

Another strand of the connection between memory and inscription is the question whether writing is to be considered as an aid or an annihilation of memory. The question was initially presented by Plato in his dialogue *Phaedrus* (ca 370 BCE), where Socrates recounts to Phaedrus the

myth of the Egyptian god Theuth, who, among other arts, had also invented the “use of letters” and presented it to the Egyptian king Thamus as a “medicine”²⁴ [*pharmakon*] for both memory and the wit” (Plato 2008a, 274e). King Thamus, however, saw the impact of writing as precisely contrary, “for this discovery [- -] will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves” (ibid., 275a). Thamus’s viewpoint thus prompts an alternative reading of Theuth’s above-quoted description of writing. As Jacques Derrida points out in his long essay “Plato’s Pharmacy”, Plato’s choice of words implies that writing can also be seen as a “poison for both memory and wit”, for “poison” is the alternative meaning of the word *pharmakon* (Derrida 1981, passim).²⁵

²⁴ In his translation of *Phaedrus*, Benjamin Jowett translates the word *pharmakon* as “specific”, which is a dated synonym in English for “medicine” or “remedy” (OED, s.v. “specific”, B.1a). I have here replaced Jowett’s “specific” with “medicine” for the sake of comprehensibility. As for the reasons for choosing “medicine” over “remedy”, see the next footnote.

²⁵ In “Plato’s Pharmacy”, Derrida emphasizes the complications in translating the word *pharmakon* into other languages in this context. The polysemy of the original Greek word has prompted the English translators to choose from such words as “remedy”, “recipe”, “drug”, or “philtre” (Derrida 1981, 71). It is often translated as “remedy”, which according to Derrida (ibid., 97) “erases [- -] the other pole reserved in the word *pharmakon*” and “cancels out the resources of ambiguity”, for “remedy” is a “beneficent drug”. In this respect, even “medicine” is a better choice, and thus I have replaced Jowett’s “specific” with “medicine” instead of “remedy”.

3.2.3. Body memory

[M]y body would recall from each room in succession
what the bed was like, where the doors were, how
daylight came in at the windows, whether there was a
passage outside, what I had had in my mind when I
went to sleep, and had found there when I awoke.
—Marcel Proust: *Remembrance of Things Past*

Although memory is usually perceived to be of essentially mental origin,²⁶ still “*the mind of memory is already in the world*” and can be found, for instance, “in places and in the company of others” as well as “in the lived body” (Casey 2000, 258–259; his italics). Casey defines *body memory* as “intrinsic to the body, to its own ways of remembering: how we remember in and by and through the body”, and as such it is a crucial factor in our lives (ibid., 147).

Henri Bergson (1988, 78) has described the body as an “ever advancing boundary between the future and the past”, and Casey’s view reflects this definition. For Casey (2000, 179–180), the body is a “mediator” and “crucially interstitial in status”, occupying the boundary between mind and place. It is at the same time both “contiguous with mind” and “conterminous with place” (ibid., 180; see also Trigg 2011, 38). For the purposes of this study, the strong link between body and place emphasized by Casey is particularly intriguing. We find our way and “take up habitation” (Casey 2000, 180) in place by bodily movement, and, consequently, the body becomes a crucial element also for the discussion of our relationship with place, as manifested in the nexus between place, memory, and *genius loci*.

²⁶ Casey (2000, 258) illustrates the dominant role of mind in “memorial matters” by pointing at the etymology of the word in English, i.e., “the rooting of the word ‘memory’ in *memor-* (mindful) — and ultimately of ‘remembering’, ‘reminding’, and ‘reminiscing’ in *mens* (mind)”.

Interestingly, Casey's definition bears a certain resemblance to David Seamon's concept of "place ballet", by which Seamon refers to "time-space routines" — day-to-day routines regularly carried out in specific places (Seamon 1980, *passim*). According to Seamon (*ibid.*), place ballet "generates a strong sense of place because of its continual and regular human activity".

Bergson was among the first²⁷ to distinguish between two complementary forms of memory: "true memory", or "pure memory", which "records [- -] all the events of our daily life as they occur in time" and retains them in our consciousness, and "habit-memory", which refers to the way the body remembers its own past activity as a series of "motor mechanisms", acting rather than representing our past to us (Bergson 1988, 78–82, 150–151; see also Connerton 1989, 22–23). Since then, the diversity of different memory systems has been actively discussed by philosophers, cognitive psychologists, and experimental biologists, and, over the last few decades, the division between "true memory" and "habit-memory" has evolved into a fundamental dichotomy of — respectively — declarative versus non-declarative memory (Squire 2004, *passim*; Lewicka 2014, 79–80).²⁸

²⁷ Bergson presented his views on the various types of memory in 1896, when his *Matière et mémoire* was first published. The idea had, however, already been referred to earlier in the 19th century by Maine de Biran and William James (Squire 2004, 171).

²⁸ Lewicka (2014, 79–80; *her italics*) presents the distinction as one "between declarative (*'I know that'*) and procedural (*'I know how'*) memory". Still, according to current consensus in memory studies, a more accurate classification would be to distinguish between declarative and non-declarative memory, of which procedural memory is only a subcategory (Squire 2004, 173). Another popular parallel distinction has been that of explicit versus implicit memory, but this too is now seen as slightly inaccurate (*ibid.*, 172). In this study, I shall, however, occasionally use implicit memory as a synonym for non-declarative memory — especially when referring to the developmental theory of place attachment in chapter 5. On the different neurophysiological bases of declarative and non-declarative memories, see Nalbantian 2014, 135–152.

Despite its pioneering status, Bergson's original classification has thus been later revised and refined. For instance, Casey criticizes Bergson's view of bodily memory as inadequate because of the "*pars pro toto* approach", i.e., his definition of body memory as merely a habit-memory, whereas Casey himself wants to distinguish between three main types of body memory: habitual memory, traumatic memory, and memories of bodily pleasures (Casey 2000, 147ff). Of these three, *habitual body memory* is broadly equivalent to Bergson's habit-memory. It involves embodied actions and movements, orienting our present actions and familiarizing us with our surroundings. We do not normally take notice of it, as it functions unintentionally and at a "deeply prereflective level" (ibid., 152). Only when our habitual body memory fails us — as when we, in a new house, search for a light switch in the wrong place, in the place where it was situated in our old home — do we become conscious of our habitual memory.

Of Casey's three types of body memory, it is precisely the habitual body memory that helps us in getting oriented in our environment, helps us in becoming *placed*. Body memory may thus occasionally be more about the present or even the future than the past (Donohoe 2014, 21). Accordingly, the "intimate relationship between memory and place" becomes possible particularly "*through the lived body*" (Casey 2000, 189; his italics). When Gaston Bachelard in his phenomenological and psychoanalytical study of the literary images of space, *The Poetics of Space* (1994, 14), writes about how the "house we were born in is physically inscribed in us", he is in fact also referring to the effects of the habitual body memory. According to Bachelard (ibid., 14–15), the house we were born in "is a group of organic habits" where the "feel of the tiniest latch has remained in our hands", and, as such, it has "engraved within us the hierarchy of the various functions of inhabiting".

A famous example of a strong presence of the habitual body memory is found in the opening pages of Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, where the narrator describes how, upon the first moments of awakening, his body would in an instant recall and recognize his surroundings while his brain was still searching for clues as to his whereabouts (Proust 2009, Overture). However, although the body memory of Proust's narrator would appear to be identical to Bergson's habit-memory, there still exists a crucial difference between those two (Whitehead 2007, chapter 3). Namely, for Bergson, the habit-memory is purely mechanical as well as isolated from the workings of the true memory, whereas for Proust, body memory is able to resurrect the past in its entirety and to initiate a chain of associations which will then also bring back those memories which Bergson classifies as being part of the true memory (ibid.).²⁹

Of Casey's three types of body memory, the habitual body memory is the most interesting for the purposes of this study. As for the other two categories of body memory, traumatic and erotic, the former will be of use in chapter 6, especially when discussing Michael Moorcock's *Mother London* and the war experiences of its protagonists. Casey (2000, 154) defines traumatic body memory as "aris[ing] from and bear[ing] on one's own lived body in moments of duress". Typically, traumatic body memories concern specific parts of the body, and, contrary to habitual body memories, they do not connect with our surroundings, but, instead, they force

²⁹ Anne Whitehead (2007, chapter 3) compares Bergson's true or pure memory and his habit memory to the involuntary and voluntary memories described by Proust in the famous passage on the madeleine in *Remembrance of Things Past*. Whitehead sees the main difference between their conceptions of memory in the role of the body, which for Bergson — Proust's cousin by marriage — belongs solely to the mechanical realm of the habit memory, whereas for Proust, it has an important role in the workings of the memory as a whole, igniting the spontaneous involuntary memory, which may then lead to the more conscious exercise of voluntary memory.

our “memorial consciousness literally inside” ourselves (ibid.). Fragmentation of the lived body is another important characteristic of the traumatic body memory; it does not concern the “body as a coordinated whole” as the habitual body memory does (ibid., 155).

However, habitual body memory forms also a link to collective memory, the topic of the last section below, because social habit-memory — in the form of “commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices” — is central to the transference of collective memory between generations (Connerton 1989, 39–40; see also Whitehead 2007, chapter 4).

3.2.4. Collective memory

Without memory, there is no culture. Without
memory, there would be no civilization,
no society, no future.

—Elie Wiesel: *A God Who Remembers*

On the preceding pages, the modes and metaphors of memory have been explored almost exclusively from the perspective of an individual memory. Questions of individual memory dominated memory discussion until the early twentieth century and the publication in 1925 of Maurice Halbwachs’s *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*,³⁰ where he first used the term *collective memory* (Halbwachs 1992, 38).³¹ He analysed the concept

³⁰ *The Social Frameworks of Memory*; translated into English as *On Collective Memory* in 1992 by Lewis A. Coser.

³¹ As the editors of *The Collective Memory Reader* (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy 2011, 16) note, Halbwachs did not actually invent the term, as the concept

further in *The Collective Memory*, published posthumously in 1950. Since then, the concept has been studied extensively and applied to various purposes.

The central assumption of Halbwachs and other scholars of collective memory is that “memory depends on the social environment” (Halbwachs 1992, 37). Our social environment does not only influence our processing of the present moment, it also affects our remembering of the past (Zerubavel 1999, 81). Halbwachs — a former pupil of Bergson’s — opposed Bergson’s view that our whole past remains in our memory in its entirety. Instead, in Halbwachs’s view, memory is not a “subterranean gallery” of “ready-made images”, but, rather, society provides us with “all the necessary information for reconstructing certain parts of our past” which are only incompletely stored in our mind or have even totally faded from our memory (Halbwachs 1980, 75).³²

The social frameworks of memory are formed by different groups or “remembrance environments” (Zerubavel 1999, 81). These groups exist “somewhere between the strictly personal and the absolutely universal” and include various social groups from the family to ethnic groups, religious communities, and even entire nations. In this view, an individual memory is always only a part of a wider group memory, and the social framework of memory “confines and binds our most intimate remembrances to each other” (Halbwachs 1992, 53). Accordingly, “it is individual

was already used in various contexts at the time of the publications of *The Social Frameworks of Memory*. Neither is Halbwachs the sole source for later writers — in fact, often only the term is taken from him. However, the way in which Halbwachs raised the theme of collective memory into wider awareness, grants him a certain kind of totemic status in the eyes of the scholarly community. (OLICK, Jeffrey K., Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy: Introduction. *The Collective Memory Reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 3–62.)

³² Halbwachs’s view of remembering as a process of reconstructing the past is also nearer to the perception of modern cognitive psychology.

as group members who remember” (Halbwachs 1980, 48). However, there are also differing opinions as to the possibility of a purely individual memory, and for instance in Zerubavel’s view, “it is quite clear that we each have our own unique autobiographical memories, made up of absolutely personal experiences that we share with nobody else” (Zerubavel 1999, 82). Still, the act of remembering does not take place “in a social vacuum” (ibid.).

As for the time horizon of collective memories and the possibility of their transmission from one generation to the next, in Halbwachs’s view, “collective memory goes back to a varying distance”, but “[b]eyond this point it no longer grasps events and persons directly” (Halbwachs 1980, 106). At that point, it changes over from collective memory to history. However, Paul Connerton (1989, 38) for instance regards Halbwachs’s notions as deficient, especially concerning the communication between generations, which enables the transfer of group memories.³³ Similarly, Zerubavel (1999, 90) sees that “much of what we seem to ‘remember’ we did not actually experience personally”, and thus, as members of different “mnemonic communities” we may also “remember” “socially mediated memories” of events that may have happened long before we were even born. Jan Assmann’s solution to the dilemma of the limited temporal horizon of Halbwachs’s collective memory is to distinguish between *communicative memory*, which consists of those memories that are handed down in everyday communication, and *cultural memory*, which is distant from the everyday and has as its fixed reference points various momentous events from the community’s past (Assmann 1995, 126–129).

³³ As has been discussed earlier, in connection with body memory, for Connerton (1989) it is particularly the social habit-memory that has a crucial role in the transfer of social memories between generations.

For the purposes of this study, it is noteworthy how the idea of collective memory is often connected with place, beginning with Halbwachs's remark that "every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework" (Halbwachs 1980, 140), and climaxing in Pierre Nora's exploration of the "sites of memory" of the French history in *Les lieux de mémoire* (1984–92). According to Halbwachs (1980, 133, 140), "[w]hen a group has lived a long time in a place adapted to its habits, its thoughts as well as its movements are in turn ordered by the succession of images from these external objects", for "space is a reality that endures".

—4—

The immemorial place

The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.

— Italo Calvino: *Invisible Cities*

4.1. Memories beyond memory

4.1.1. Cheddar Man and Troia Nova

Brutus, beyond the setting of the sun, past the realms of Gaul, there lies an island in the sea, once occupied by giants. Now it is empty and ready for your folk. Down the years this will prove an abode suited to you and to your people; and for your descendants it will be a second Troy. A race of kings will be born there from your stock and the round circle of the whole earth will be subject to them.

Thus, according to *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c.1136), written by the twelfth-century bishop and historian Geoffrey of Monmouth, prophecies

the goddess Diana to Brutus, great-grandson of the legendary Trojan hero Aeneas, who has left Troy with his fleet of Trojan exiles and sails in search of a new land in which to settle (Geoffrey 1966, 65). And it so happens that Diana's predictions come true as Brutus finally, after a long and violent voyage, arrives at the promised island, at that time still called Albion.

Brutus is excited by the great natural riches of the island. With his men, he drives the few extant giants into mountain caves and divides the land — renamed Britain after his own name — among his comrades. His people are henceforth called Britons.

There still remains one important task for Brutus to perform: he needs to build a capital for this newly occupied beautiful island. Thus, according to Geoffrey (1966, 73–74),

[i]n pursuit of this plan, he visited every part of the land in search of a suitable spot. He came at length to the River Thames, walked up and down its banks and so chose a site suited to his purpose. There he built his city and called it Troia Nova. It was known by this name for long ages after, but finally by a corruption of the word it came to be called Trinovantum.

Over the following centuries, the city witnesses yet a couple of other name changes: from Trinovantum to Kaer Lud, Lud's City, named after King Lud — the mythical brother of the British chief Cassivelaunus, defeated by Julius Caesar in 54 BCE — and later to Kaerlundein, after which, "[i]n a later age, as languages evolved, it took the name London" (ibid., 106). The eponymous King Lud, for his part, is given his final resting place near the city walls he rebuilt, and the nearest gateway is known today as Ludgate.

Although during earlier centuries Geoffrey's chronicle was often considered authentic history, some critics realized its mostly fictional nature

as early as the twelfth century (Thorpe 1976, 17, 28)³⁴. Still, from the start, it had an enormous influence and soon became an important source and inspiration for medieval poets, dramatists, and other authors not just in Britain but also on the Continent, where a Norman translation, *Roman de Brut*, was made already in 1155. In addition to the tale of Brutus and his fellow Trojans, a significant part of the work is dedicated to the story of King Arthur, and thus the Norman translation was especially important in its introduction of the Arthurian legend into European literary tradition, resulting in a stream of prose romances by Chrétien de Troyes and other twelfth- and thirteenth-century French poets and reverberating through the centuries even to this day (BA, s.v. “Arthurian legend”).

More myth than history, Geoffrey’s account of the arrival of Brutus at the shores of Albion and his building of the New Troy on the banks of the Thames thus belongs to the large group of various founding myths, told in order to establish an ancient and eminent background for a nation or a city. However, in the context of the present research subject, the story of Brutus can also be read as one version of *immemorial collective memory*: a transgenerational remembrance — albeit in this case a mythical one — passing from generation to generation and enduring over centuries, possibly even millennia. As such it represents one of the two possible modes of immemorial collective memory to be discussed in the following: *the mythical mode*, based on various local or collective historical myths, and *the mode of real history*, based on documented or otherwise verifiable historical or prehistorical facts.

³⁴ Although most of *Historia Regum Britanniae* is undeniably fictional, history still “keeps peeping through the fiction” (Thorpe 1976, 19). For instance, many of the names are real and historical and many of the places can be pinned down on the map. In addition, recent archaeological discoveries have thrown new light on Geoffrey’s alleged flights of fancy (Thorpe, 18–19).

Thus, in the early dawn of the immemorial memory of Britain and London, there looms, next to the mythical Brutus the Trojan, a miscellaneous cluster of shadowy figures from British history and prehistory, including Normans, Vikings, Anglo-Saxons, Romans, and Celts as well as the ten thousand year old Cheddar Man, whose skeleton was found in 1903 in a cave in Cheddar Gorge in Somerset and who may be considered the symbolic starting point of continuous modern British settlement (Davies 2000, 3–5; Stringer 2006, 225–230).³⁵ Even the primeval humans found in Swanscombe and Boxgrove — 400 000 and 500 000 years old respectively and belonging to an earlier species of *Homo*, *Homo heidelbergensis* — have their place in this mixed bunch of ancient Britons, even though their stays — and thus any continuity with modern times — were cut short by advancing glaciers (Stringer 2006, *passim*)³⁶.

All these mythical and real ancestors are part of the (pre)historical base on which later generations have built their shared memories. They are also part of the foundation for the local — and nationwide — mythology in Maureen Duffy's *Capital* (1975, henceforth referred to as *C*) and Peter Ackroyd's *The House of Doctor Dee* (1993, henceforth referred to as *HDD*), to be discussed in this chapter. In addition, both Duffy and Ackroyd have approached the history and mythology of their country also in their non-fiction writing, Duffy in her concise study of English and British history, *England: The Making of the Myth from Stonehenge to Albert Square* (2001), and Ackroyd in several of his historical and biographical studies,

³⁵ When Cheddar Man's mitochondrial DNA was compared to local samples from the present-day Cheddar village, several close matches were found (Stringer 2006, 229). Although modern contamination of the ancient DNA cannot be totally ruled out, there still exists "an unbroken chain of people" between Cheddar Man and modern Britain and, consequently, at least a symbolic continuity from his days to the present, whereas the earlier settlers were swept away by glacial periods.

³⁶ Even earlier artefacts and traces have lately been found on the coast of Suffolk and Norfolk, stretching the prehistory of human occupation in Britain as far as 700-800 000 years back (Stringer 2006, 62–77).

most lately in his six-part history of England, of which the fourth volume, *Revolution*, was published in October 2017.

Consequently, although the primary subject of this study is *genius Londinii*, in this chapter, the perspective is on occasion briefly widened to include also the spirit of England / Britain, as both Duffy and Ackroyd frequently make an explicit connection between the two. However, the main focus will still be on place and the relationship between place, memory and the spirit of place — not on any national thematics per se. Thus, in the following pages, I shall first briefly explore the similarities and differences between the concepts of memory, history, and myth, before focusing on the novels of Duffy and Ackroyd in chapters 4.2. and 4.3. respectively. The last chapter, 4.4., will then conclude the discussion.

4.1.2. Memory, history, and myth

Of the various modes of memory presented in chapter 3, especially that of *collective memory* becomes essential when addressing the concentric circles of topographical *genii* in Duffy's and Ackroyd's novels. Although, overall, memory in its various forms dominates the discussion during this study, in the present chapter, however, also the demarcation between collective memory and history as well as the relationship of them to myth will be referred to. The main reason for this lies both in the double nature of the immemorial collective memory mentioned above and in the partly synecdochic linkage between the country and its capital city in Duffy's and Ackroyd's novels, which has its own ramifications as to the roles of memory, history, and myth in shaping the *genius Londinii*.

The relationship between collective memory and history as well as the affinities and differences between collective memory and myth have been discussed by various authors and, in general, the interrelationship of the

three neighbouring concepts is seen as a continuum, with collective memory residing somewhere in the middle, “between the push and pull” of myth and history (Margalit 2002, 63). Like a myth, collective memory “provides stories that members of a group share and through which they can identify salient characteristics of the kind of people they believe themselves to be”, but, at the same time, it also makes claims to historical truth (Poole 2008, 157–158). Whatever the actual truth-value of these stories and memories, through them the group invents itself as a community, creating a “deep, horizontal comradeship”, which according to Benedict Anderson (2006, 7) is typical of an “imagined community”, either a nation or a smaller community.

The few interpretative differences mainly concern the relative position of collective memory on this historico-mythological scale. For instance, Avishai Margalit deems the pull of myth stronger than that of history, and thus, for him, a shared memory is a “closed memory”, where “the only line of memory leading to [the remembered] event is the one authorized by the tradition of the community as its canonical line of memory” (Margalit 2002, 60). This standpoint resembles that of a traditionalist, for whom “the memory itself matters a great deal, while its veracity counts for less” (Margalit 2002, 61). However, if we accept the claims of collective memory to reach the actual, historical past, then its veracity may also be doubted and — like history — it can be criticized, adjusted and corrected (Poole 2008, 158). Otherwise, it becomes part of the community’s mythology — as does the “closed memory” defined by Margalit (*ibid.*).

Still, despite its openness to alteration and modification, collective memory is not purely identical to history, for it is not only a chronicle of historical facts but also a foundation for group identity (*ibid.*). The content of history and memory may be roughly the same but their perspective is not. As “raw material” (Le Goff 1992, xi) for history, memory is “always

written in the first person”, whereas “the goal of history is that it be written in the third person” (Poole 2008, 159; see also Samuel 1994, ix; Trigg 2011, 96).³⁷

Pierre Nora (1996, 3) expresses similar views on the differences between memory and history in his General Introduction to *Realms of Memory*, a gargantuan collaborative endeavour, which tries to locate the “sites of memory” — *lieux de mémoire* — of French national identity:

Memory and history, far from being synonymous, are thus in many respects opposed. Memory is life, always embodied in living societies, and as such in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of the distortions to which it is subject, vulnerable in various ways to appropriation and manipulation, and capable of lying dormant for long periods only to be suddenly reawakened. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer.

The personal and subjective first-person viewpoint of memory — both individual and collective — is the reason why my analysis of Duffy’s and Ackroyd’s immemorial place and its *genius loci* uses collective memory instead of history as the main interpretative tool. Approaching immemorial local and regional past via the meandering path of subjective collective memory instead of the paved road of recorded history is in accordance with the phenomenological foundation of humanistic geography, which emphasizes the importance of our personal, subjective experience of place as the basis for the perception of the spirit of the place.

³⁷ Raphael Samuel (1999, ix) sees the juxtaposition of memory and history as a “legacy of Romanticism”. For him, history is a “hybrid form of knowledge” that “syncretiz[es] past and present” as well as “memory and myth” (ibid., 443).

4.2. Walking on bones in Maureen Duffy's *Capital*

We look in the distorting mirror of time
and adjust our clothes and expressions.
But an image remains that is recognizably us.
—Maureen Duffy: *England*

4.2.1. Londoners in search of lost time

In Maureen Duffy's *Capital*, the history of London is present at several levels, both thematic and structural. It manifests itself both in the occupations of the two protagonists — an amateur archaeologist and a professor of history — and in the form of the novel's twenty-eight historical interludes, which punctuate the main plot and at the same time influence the structure of the novel by determining³⁸ the overall theme of each of its five main sections, named after five historical epithets of the city: The City of the Dead, New Troy, Respublica Londiniensis, Babylon, and Cockaigne.

Throughout the novel, the bones of deceased Londoners of the past millennia seem to metaphorically poke “through the pavements” under the feet of the main characters, who may even feel the need to lift their legs “to step over a monstrous tibia” of a mammoth or happen to see an “archaeopteryx [flapping] like a garish broken parasol from the tower of St Mary's

³⁸ It is perhaps only a question of perspective how to interpret the relationship between the historical interludes and the overall tone and theme of the five main sections of the novel, i.e. if the relationship is that of oblique reference to the actual plot, as Christine Wick Sizemore (1989, 229) has noted, or, if the interludes can actually be seen to determine the tone of the narrative. If the question is approached from the standpoint of historical necessity, it could be said that the interludes are affected by the real-life history of London, whereas the tone of the main plot is determined by the interludes.

blotting out the clockface" (C, 17). The fundamental connectedness of the historical and even prehistorical layers of the city is also indicated in many of the interludes — or "vignettes" (Sizemore 1989, *passim*) — as for instance in the scene where we meet a Neanderthal man strolling through London in a search for a new group that he could join after his own group members have all died. The scene follows the trail of the Neanderthal as on the map of a present-day London:

At Battersea he launched a log across the current and, although it drifted quickly downstream, by paddling hard with a leafy birch branch he was able to land at Millbank where he shook himself and leapt up and down to restore his legs numbed by the chill water. As he moved up towards Piccadilly he pulled handfuls of black crowberry fruits and stuffed them into his mouth. (C, 27.)

Despite the early date of his wandering, the Neanderthal is not the first to leave his footprints on the London soil. In Duffy's *Capital* — as in the real-life capital, too — the earliest memories formed are those of even a more primeval species of the genus *Homo*, *Homo heidelbergensis*, represented by the so-called Swanscombe Man — in fact probably a woman — whose skull bones were found in 1935 in Swanscombe, Kent, near the bank of the Thames (Stringer 2006, 107). In Duffy's novel, the Swanscombe (Wo)Man is met in the first interlude, where Duffy envisages the death of a primaeval woman as a result of a difficult childbirth near the outskirts of present-day London:

Swanscombe Man, who was probably a woman aged about twenty-five, was dying beside the Thames. Three bones from her skull would be found a quarter of a million years later. She would never quite reach London. (C, 21.)

Thus, the “Neanderthalensis” is also already walking on bones, as below his feet, too, “the sharp handaxes of millennia before [lie] quietly together on a bed of London clay” (*C*, 27).

The interludes, which stretch from the days of the Swanscombe woman to the present, cover most of the significant moments in London’s history, including also a few more mythical phases of the capital’s past, such as the legendary times of King Arthur, “the Artor” (*C*, 56–66) or those of two other fictitious kings, Lud and Leir, called Lludd and Llyr in Duffy’s text (*C*, 72–74). Supported by these interludes flows the present-day story of the two protagonists, an elderly amateur archaeologist, Mr Meepers, and his opponent — who later becomes his supporter — an unnamed³⁹ professor of history at Queen’s College in the University of London. The historical interests of the two men are very different, although both in their own ways feel deeply connected to the past of the city.⁴⁰

The middle-aged professor is an expert on the eighteenth century, the Age of Enlightenment — also referred to as the Age of Reason in the novel (*C*, 93) — and in the present-day narrative of the novel, he is giving a lecture course at the summer school of the university on his special field. He also functions as a narrator in the novel, as half of the present-day scenes are narrated by him in his letters to his spouse or lover, who has travelled away for the summer, probably to America.

As for Meepers, he is a passionate amateur archaeologist, whose field of interest lies much earlier in history compared to that of the professor. In addition to doing his own research — which includes clandestine archaeological excavations around various new building sites in London —

³⁹ In his introduction to a new edition of Duffy’s *Capital*, Paul Bailey incorrectly names the professor “Emery” (Bailey 2001, viii), however, in fact Emery is the name of a head porter of the university who works as Meepers’s superior.

⁴⁰ Sebastian Groes (2011, 22) perceives the “psychological split” between the two protagonists as “alert[ing] us to the Gothic motif of the Double”.

he also gives lectures on the prehistory of London to local societies. He is especially interested in the obscure post-Roman centuries from the beginning of the fifth century to the mid-seventh century and believes the understanding of those centuries to be the key to predicting the future of the city.

The two men meet when Meepers offers an article to a historical journal edited by the professor — an article which the editor-professor, however, promptly turns down as unsuitable for the journal. According to him, it is “too early and conjectural” (C, 116). After the rejection of his article, Meepers decides to take a job as a porter at the college in order to spy the academia out:

He would go to university; he would study and then he would prove he was right, irrefutably. But he had to get in and to do that he had to be able to reconnoitre first. That was why he had taken the porter’s job. The uniform was a passport to anywhere in the building and now it seemed as if it was all the entrance qualifications he needed. (C, 26.)

In addition to his porter’s job, Meepers works as a gardener in a London garden square where he used to live as a child. By chance, the professor’s flat is right next door to Meepers’s childhood home. Meepers himself, however, is homeless, squatting in the garden shed of the square garden. Later, he is compelled to search for new accommodation in a lodge in Kensington Gardens, and from there he moves — still without a permission — to an eleventh-floor washroom in an empty, newly built tower block⁴¹. The terminus of Meepers’s vagrant residential career is back in his childhood square, as the professor rescues Meepers from accusations of squatting in

⁴¹ Paul Bailey (2001, vii) notes the tower block’s resemblance to the “notorious Centre Point”, a 35-storey tower, built in the 1960s at the junction of Oxford Street and Charing Cross Road and empty for a decade after its completion (Inwood 1998, 847–848; Porter 1994, 357).

the empty tower block and offers the elder man accommodation in his own home. It will also be the terminus of Meepers's life.

In addition to the letter-writing professor-narrator and Mr. Meepers — whose story is told by an omniscient narrator — there are also a couple of minor characters, most of them connected to the university, like Wandle and Ponders, who belong to its teaching staff. The “dedicated Leftwinger” (C, 47) Wandle teaches courses on sociology and Ponders is the head of the Department of Cybernetics, responsible for the programming of the university's central computer, “George”, which hums deep in the basement of the college. “George” is, in fact, Meepers's other motivation to take a job at the college, for he hopes to use the computer as an aid in finding a solution to the mystery of the lost post-Roman centuries of London. In the end, his wish comes true, but sadly, George's answer remains a mystery to both Meepers facing his death and to the reader turning the last pages of the novel.

The rest of the minor characters represent the younger generation of Londoners. Two of them, Jenny and Robin, are attending the professor's lecture course on the eighteenth century. As for their flatmates, a second-generation immigrant, Martha, and her little baby boy Ben, they embody London's substantial immigrant population, and their final appearance towards the end of the novel, as Martha is seen showing Ben “his inheritance”, i.e. the memorials and relics in Westminster Abbey, could also be read as the penultimate section of the novel's historical interludes. The subject of the preceding interlude, which tells of a West Indian immigrant of the so-called Windrush generation trying to make a living in London, seems to imply this reading of Martha's and Ben's last appearance in the novel.

4. The immemorial place

4.2.2. Two perspectives on the past

In her study of the “female vision” of London, Christine Wick Sizemore analyses the image of the city in the novels of Doris Lessing, Margaret Drabble, Iris Murdoch, P. D. James, and Maureen Duffy using the images of — respectively — palimpsest, network, labyrinth, mosaic, and archaeological dig to illustrate the “different aspects of [an] overarching matrix image” shared by the five authors (Sizemore 1989, 8). She perceives the image of an archaeological dig to be especially dominant in Maureen Duffy’s novels, as Duffy “brings history and the passage of time in the city to the foreground” and thus creates an urban image where “each layer [- -] has riches worth treasuring” (ibid., 7–8). In Duffy’s novels, the image of the archaeological dig appears for instance in the overtly gay *Microcosm* (1966) and in the partly autobiographical *Londoners* (1983) (ibid., 193–219).⁴² In addition, Duffy has referred to the image when describing British authors’ relationship to London in general, noting how “[w]e come to her, literally and metaphorically, as to a mine or a many layered [*sic*] image we can all as writers quarry or unravel and yet the riches and complexity will remain” (Duffy 1986, 8 / quoted in Sizemore 1989, 189).⁴³

⁴² Amongst Duffy’s colleagues, Peter Ackroyd has also compared the history of the city to an archaeological excavation in his novel *Hawksmoor* (1985), where the other main character of the novel, CID Detective Nicholas Hawksmoor visits an excavation pit in the City of London and has a discussion with the archaeologist, who sees “time as a rock face, which in her dreams she sometimes descended”. When Hawksmoor then rubs a piece of earth between his fingers, he, too “[imagines] himself tumbling through the centuries to become dust or clay” (Ackroyd 1993a, 161). The motif of archaeology also appears in Ackroyd’s novel *The Fall of Troy* (2006), which uses the real-life excavations of Troy by the German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann as a historical subtext (see also Brax 2017, 83–90).

⁴³ DUFFY, Maureen 1986: Foreword. *20,000 Streets Under the Sky: The London Novel 1896-1985*. Catalogue of an Exhibition at The Bookspace, Royal Festival Hall, London, Feb. 17–March 12.

In *Capital*, the image of the city as an archaeological site appears even in a concrete form, through Meepers's private archaeological activities. However, as Sizemore (1989, 219) notes, the image also manifests itself in the plot of the novel as well as in its multilayered structure.⁴⁴ The layers of history become visible not only in the protagonists' occupations and interests but also in the historical interludes, which puncture the plot in chronological order, forming a narrative analogy of an archaeological cross-section of the London soil. The skull bones of the Swanscombe (Wo)Man in the first interlude lie deep in the bottommost layer, upon which the subsequent archaeological layers gradually stratify during the narration.

In the novel, archaeology is Meepers's speciality — or, rather, it is the tool which he uses to find proof of life in London during the obscure Dark Ages of the city's early history. However, in the novel, we are also given another perspective on the past via the other protagonist, the professor, and his specialism, history — or, to be more precise, the more recent history of the eighteenth century. Meepers and the professor can thus be seen as a pair of opposites, a polarity of two complementary views on the past of the city. Especially in the beginning, not just their fields of interest but also their attitudes towards the past and its significance differ slightly. Although the professor in a letter to his lover mentions his "passion for the eighteenth century" (C, 22), his stance is still more detached compared to Meepers, who is passionate about his research. In fact, Meepers really is an *amateur* archaeologist in the original sense of the word deriving its etymology from the Latin word for love, *amare* (OED, s.v. "amateur").

⁴⁴ Of the other four images distinguished by Sizemore also that of palimpsest — which Sizemore uses in her reading of Doris Lessing's London novels — would suit Duffy's *Capital*. (See also Wolfreys 2004, 95.)

Furthermore, also the attitudes of the two protagonists towards their hometown seem to vary. Here, too, the professor appears as a distant observer, even when walking among the crowds of the city. Instead of actually involving himself in the life of the city, he only monitors it from above and then reports the results of his monitoring to his lover far away in another country in his letters. His sarcastic comments on the “sheer dowdiness of the city” (*C*, 45) illustrate both his derisive outlook on the present-day city and its citizens and his perception of the decay of the city since the eighteenth century, as when he compares the city to a threadbare wig:

They [the tourists] come to gape at the remains of this vast tel⁴⁵ that’s like a highdressed wig, powdered and bejewelled but where the mice have nested, undermined, heartless and the lice run among its remaining hairs and drop from the thin ringlets on to the dirty tidemarked neck, the suburbs. (*C*, 79.)

For the professor, the city has become an “old wife” he barely speaks to anymore “except to complain [his] dinner’s cold and dry” (*C*, 127).

As for Meepers, he does not merely observe but feels the city and especially its past almost concretely in his body. Meepers’s intimate relationship with the historical layers of London is brought to the fore right in the opening paragraph of the first chapter, “The City of the Dead”, in which he feels the cinders of Roman legionaries “gritting beneath the soles of his thin shoes”, the bones of plague victims poking “through the pavements”, and sees “long buried noblemen [looking] down at him from the portrait gallery of street names enshrining their riverside mansions and estates above his head” (*C*, 17). Homelessness might give him an outcast status in the eyes of his fellow citizens — although he does his best to hide it from

⁴⁵ The word “tel” or “tell” is an archaeological term, borrowed from Arabic, and refers to “a mound formed from the accumulated remains of ancient settlements” (*OED*, s.v. “tell, n.2.”, last accessed 1 March 2016).

everyone — but at the same time the city as a whole functions as emotional support for him. The consolatory role of the city in Meepers's life becomes especially evident after he has been mugged in a suburban railway station and later, on the train, yearns to be back in the city:

Would Charing Cross ever come? He wanted to be sucked into the obliterating city where he would be supported and comforted by its very presence and continuity, by its millions of ant bodies busying around him. (C, 38.)

Towards the end of the novel, however, the two men come closer to each other in their attitudes towards the city and its past — mainly thanks to the professor's changing outlook on Meepers and his research project. A decisive step in the reconciliation of the two men is taken when Meepers is arrested after falling into a pit in a construction site during one of his secret archaeological excursions and, to avoid a charge for vagrancy, he gives the professor's address to the police as his own. The professor fetches Meepers from the police station and lets Meepers stay overnight as his guest, which gives Meepers a chance to explain his mission to the professor. In the pit, Meepers has found a little shard of a broken old pot from the first century A.D., but for him, the truth about the past — especially about the post-Roman survival of the city — is only a tool to predict the future:

'The real question is in the future not the past. Or perhaps I should say it's the same question with a gap of fifteen hundred or two thousand years between the asking. Does it survive?'
'I don't follow quite,' I said, feeling a fool of course. 'What?'
'The city, this city. This concept or medium of civilization. Did it survive? [- -]' (C, 152)

Meepers is convinced that "George" — the central computer of the college — could help him in the project, that if he could feed the computer all the

information, the computer would calculate the answer to his question. As the professor begins to better understand Meepers's project, he helps Meepers to get an opportunity to use George's computing power, and Meepers spends his last days at the professor's home desk, finishing his study and filling in all the historical and archaeological facts that George will need.

The change in the professor's opinion on Meepers is connected to the change in his views on London and on life in general. Gradually, he sheds his sarcastic attitude, at the same time as his longing for his lover intensifies, and, in the end, after his last lecture, he flies to America in search of them, without whom he feels his "veneer of civilization" breaking down (C, 208). Meanwhile, Meepers has taken lodgings in the professor's home, marvelling at the opportunity to "walk up to a front door in daylight and put a key in a lock", which is an "extraordinary experience" (C, 209) for him after his homeless years, even though his new status will only last for a couple of days. For the circle of his life will soon close next door to the house of his birth.

Christine Wick Sizemore's analysis of *Capital* focuses on the idea of a "matrilinear city" and a connection between historical continuity and the "female psyche" (Sizemore 1989, 191–192). Accordingly, she also analyses the roles of the two protagonists from this perspective and sees in their differences an analogy of the distinction between a male and a female approach to the city and its past — Meepers, with his modest and reserved manner, representing the female side.⁴⁶

However, the differing attitudes and approaches of the two protagonists can also be examined in the context of historical perspective. In this

⁴⁶ Here, Sizemore compares *Capital* to Duffy's later novel *Londoners* (1983), where both the male and the female aspects are found in one person, the protagonist Al (Sizemore 1989, *passim*).

reading, the professor represents the study of history focusing on the large trends in history, at times also defined as macrohistory, whereas Meepers, in his enthusiastic search for archaeological traces of the everyday life of past generations, personifies the field of microhistory, which concentrates on historical case studies of smaller-scale events or communities — or even studies of individual lives (Sigurður and Szíjártó 2013, 4; Ginzburg and Poni 1991, 3). To quote Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon's and István M. Szíjártó's (ibid.) comparison, "[m]icrohistorians hold a microscope and not a telescope in their hands", an analogy which could also define the differences between the attitudes of the two protagonists of *Capital*.⁴⁷ (See also Phillips 2006, 140.)

In *Capital*, the microhistorical perspective is not restricted to Meepers and his interests. Many of the historical interludes of *Capital* approach the history of the city from the perspective of the ordinary man and woman in the street, although the focalizers of the interludes may occasionally have at least a fleeting contact to the more illustrious agents of London's history, as in the scene describing the Battle of Hastings in 1066, where the events are narrated by a man fighting in the army of the Anglo-Saxon king Harold Godwinson, or, in a later interlude where the story of the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 is focalized through a young prostitute, named Flower de Luce.

The utmost example of the microhistorical perspective of the interludes is the story of the arrival of the Black Death pandemic in London at the end of 1348, told from the perspective of a rat flea — "Death" — spreading the disease from citizen to citizen:

⁴⁷ Here Sigurður and Szíjártó echo Eric Hobsbawm, who in his comment to Lawrence Stone's article "The revival of narrative" states that "there is nothing new in choosing to see the world via a microscope rather than a telescope" (HOBSBAWM, Eric 1980: Revival of narrative: some comments. *Past and Present*. No. 86 (Feb. 1980). 3–8. Page 7).

Death eased himself out of the bristling fur and thumbed a lift ashore in a bale of cloth glad to shake off the monotony of ship-board. He took a refreshing draught from his porter and skipped nimbly away among the wharfside crowd til he found an overseer to take him home to his master's house for the night. He dined under the table on the plump white thigh of the merchant's wife then crept back into the shop where he curled up with a snoring apprentice warm until daylight when the shutters were opened. Death sprang up merrily determined to get as far as he could by nightfall. (C, 127.)

Capital was first published in 1975, a year before Carlo Ginzburg's study *The Cheese and Worms (Il formaggio e i vermi)*, which can be considered the starting point of the Italian *microstoria* and one of the early classics of microhistorical research in general. By 1975, Emanuel Le Roy Ladurie had already published *Montaillou*, a microhistorical study of a mediaeval French village of the same name, and E. P. Thompson had focused on the backgrounds of an eighteenth-century Act against English poachers in *Whigs and Hunters*. (Sigurður and Szíjártó 2013, 1; Peltonen 1999, 11, 14.) Thus, although microhistory was not yet established as a term at the time of the writing of *Capital*, the man-in-the-street perspective of the novel's interludes interestingly links *Capital* with the contemporary perspectival shift in the field of historical research, in some instances also referred to as "the revival of narrative" (Stone 1979, 8).

In his social history of London, Roy Porter notes that "[h]istories of London have been of two sorts", concentrating mainly on architecture and buildings or momentous historical events. However, although the aforementioned foci are both important, "concentration on them may be a distraction to city history". As Porter concludes: "[W]e must make the distinction between the city as stage for public events and the city as actor". (Porter 1994, 8–9.) In the historical interludes of Maureen Duffy's *Capital*, the city undergoes a metamorphosis from a mere stage to an active actor. In

the interludes, the city is shown as a living organism, consisting of countless active particles, i.e. the inhabitants of the city participating in the formation of its history. Meepers's research, too, emphasizes the significance of the individual parts of the great urban organism as well as the traces they have left of their contribution to the vast fabric of the life of a city with a history extending back over two millennia.

The complementary interests of the two protagonists, together with the historical snapshots painted by the interludes, could also be read in terms of the duality of individual versus collective memory. In *Capital*, the individual memories of the citizens — both the present-day characters and the (micro)historical actors — coalesce with the collective memory of the urban community, together forming the totality of the urban past and its continuity. Although in this study I primarily use the term *collective memory* to refer to the shared memories of a community, many of the interludes in *Capital* present the reader with a past that could also justify substituting the term *collective memory* at least temporarily with *cultural memory*, defined by Jan Assmann (1995, 129) as having as its “fixed points [- -] fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation [- -] and institutional communication”. For, despite their microhistorical perspective, most of the interludes are associated with such significant historical turning points in the history of London and Britain, which could also be seen as “fixed points” of the cultural memory of the capital. Julian Wolfreys (2004, 91), too, reads the novel as an address on “the role cultural memory plays in the generation of urban structure”, and, thus, it is in this multidimensional and multifactor mnemonic network with its fixed nodes of cultural remembrance that the protagonists of *Capital* search for the truth about the city and its continuity.

4.2.3. Continuity and the spirit of the capital

The question of urban continuity lies at the heart of Duffy's *Capital*. It surfaces particularly via the character of Meepers and his preoccupation with the so-called Dark Ages of London's history — the partly obscure centuries following the end of the Roman rule in Britain. As he explains to the doubtful professor, who at first considered Meepers's article on the period "too early and conjectural" (C, 116):

'The city, this city. This concept or medium of civilization. Did it survive? Or did it collapse and the rats and rabbits nibble among the ruins of an unburied Pompeii, along with a few impoverished squatters? Or did it hold out, make terms with the barbarians, carry on, modifying itself in the process, maintaining a high degree of civilization? Was there in fact no break in continuity?' (C, 152.)

By "barbarians", Meepers refers to the Anglo-Saxon invaders of the first post-Roman centuries. The Roman administration in Britain ended in 410 as a result of the Roman Empire's increasing difficulties under the pressure of the barbarian invasions, which led the western emperor Honorius to turn down the Romano-British leaders' appeal for military support. Consequently, the British were henceforth forced to defend themselves without Roman aid. (Davies 2000, 120–122; Inwood 1998, 32–33; Porter 1994, 18–19.) After the Roman troops left, the British continued their struggle alone against the invading Germanic tribes — who gradually changed from invaders to settlers⁴⁸, spreading Anglo-Saxon⁴⁹ control westward and northward from the south-east. (Davies 2000, 135–138; Inwood 1998, 33–

⁴⁸ The first Saxon soldiers actually came to Britain as mercenaries, not as invaders (Inwood 1998, 34).

⁴⁹ Norman Davies (2000, 145–146) recommends the use of the term "Germanic" instead of the more commonly used "Saxon" or "Anglo-Saxon" when referring to the Continental newcomers of the post-Roman centuries.

35.) Over the following two and a half centuries, the organized town-life of the Roman period declined in several towns around Britain, and “a thick fog descend[ed] over London” (Porter 1994, 19). One reason for this development might lie in the peasant background of the invading Angles and Saxons, another in the decline of Roman trade (ibid.). Thus, hardly any traces of urban living between the early fifth and the mid-seventh centuries have been found inside the walls of the Roman Londinium (Porter 1994, 119; Inwood 1998, 33).

The post-Roman fate of the Romano-British towns has been actively studied and discussed ever since the British monk Gildas and his sixth-century sermon *On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain (De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae)*, where he offers a dramatic description of how a “fire of vengeance” spread “from sea to sea” through the whole island, destroying town after town (Gildas 2012, II, 24). The reality was probably less dramatic, and in London for instance, there was no fire or other drastic destruction, only “natural decay” (Inwood 1998, 33). However, there was at least a hiatus of organized town-life in London during the first two post-Roman centuries, although probably not a total break (Loyn 1986, 15). Moreover, the question of continuity is not limited to the survival of the urban communities but also encompasses the fate of the British population in general. Was it totally destroyed and displaced by the Anglo-Saxon invaders or merely assimilated into the Germanic culture of the newcomers? The truth may lie somewhere in between. (Ibid., 5–6.)

At the time of the writing of *Capital*, there was still an “irreconcilable conflict” between archaeological evidence and documentary sources concerning the fate of London during the early Anglo-Saxon period (Inwood 1998, 35). Although practically no archaeological traces of occupation inside the city walls had yet been found by the 1970s, there were the words

of Beda Venerabilis — the eight-century Northumbrian monk and historian — who had described London as the “chief city” of the East Saxons and “an emporium for many nations who come to it by land and sea” when writing in his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* of the consecration of Mellitus as a bishop of the East-Saxons in 604 (Bede 1994, 74). Bede’s account could naturally also be read as a description of London in Bede’s own lifetime (ibid., 376, n. s.v. “emporium”), yet in 1985, excavations in the area of Covent Garden proved the existence of an early Saxon settlement outside the city walls (Inwood 1998, 35, Porter 1994, 19). The early Saxon Lundenwic thus appears to have been a next-door neighbour to the Roman Londinium.

The theme of continuity seems to have engaged the attention of urban historians even in antiquity. As Peter Clark (2009, 18) notes, “[c]ity-history writing, with its stress on foundation myths or legends, sought to create a sense of urban continuity when discontinuity was frequently the norm”. In other words, urban decay, as well as the refounding and relocation of cities, was common despite the attempt of the ancient urban chroniclers to prove otherwise. The premises of modern urban history writing are of course less fanciful, and, for instance in recent histories of London, the question of continuity is in general treated without mystification, even with the new archaeological evidence. Only Peter Ackroyd’s *London: The Biography* (2000) is a mild exception to the rule, for Ackroyd is eager to underline the significance of the late twentieth-century discoveries as a “striking evidence of continuity” — an emphasis which is in line with the London mythology manifested in his novels (Ackroyd 2000, 31).

As for the relationship of continuity with the synergistic duality of memory and place, Pierre Nora’s (1996, 1) definition of *lieux de mémoire* as “sites [- -] in which a residual sense of continuity exists” implies that a sense of continuity is a central element in the linkage of place and memory.

It should be noted, though, that Nora speaks of a “residual” sense of continuity in connection with *lieux de mémoire*. According to Nora, “[l]ieux de mémoire exist because there are no longer any *milieux de mémoire*, settings in which memory is a real part of everyday experience” (Nora 1996, 1). Similarly, in his analysis of *Capital*, Julian Wolfreys (2004, 93) emphasizes the fragility of memory and argues that “Duffy’s perception of cultural memory [- -] is not predicated on some nostalgic sense of uninterrupted continuity of community” because “the multiple, discontinuous narratives of *Capital* make plain [that] memory is always fragile, evanescent, its erasure always possible, even as its signals are unstoppable” (ibid.).

In my reading of Duffy’s novel, however, the discontinuity of the interludes is not that of time or memory but rather that of a community formed by individuals and their microhistorical experiences. If, to quote Yi-Fu Tuan (1996, 455), “[p]laces are locations in which people have long memories, reaching back beyond the indelible impressions of their own individual childhoods to the common lores of bygone generations”, the sense of continuity afforded by a place rich in individual and collective memories becomes a central element also in the formation of a local identity and the recognition of the special character of place, *genius loci*. Similarly, the initial usage of the term *genius* as a guardian spirit residing in places incorporated the idea of permanence, represented by the *genius* as a “unifying principle” of a place (Knowlton 1928, 439; Nietzsche 1975, 7).

In *Capital*, the two protagonists also represent opposing views in their respective stances towards the idea of continuity. The professor has his doubts about the possibility of continuity, especially in the beginning of the novel, as for him, “[h]istory isn’t continuous” (C, 116), whereas Meepers’s attitude is entirely the opposite, for he believes in the continuity of the city and is “supported and comforted” by it (C, 38). As he informs the professor, his interest in the question of continuity is not “merely academic”, because

his ultimate motive is actually his urge to “save the city” (C, 116–117). According to Meepers, the future of the city can be predicted by its past.

‘If the city survived then I think it will again. It’s threatened, you must see that.’

‘By pollution and the collapse of its internal workings and services?’

‘Yes, but much more by lack of faith. We are out of love with it because we’re out of love with ourselves. What might really destroy us is human self-disgust.’

“‘Where every prospect pleases and only man is vile.’”⁵⁰

‘Something like that. There’s still a belief, largely unacknowledged in this half of the century but powerful, possibly even more so for being unexpressed, that the Roman Empire was destroyed by decadence.’ (C, 152.)

Alongside the theme of continuity, there runs in the novel the motif of urban destruction, illustrated by frequent allusions to real and legendary lost cities and societies, such as Pompeii, Atlantis, and Troy. As the question of London’s continuity is tightly linked to the fate of the city’s former Roman rulers, the fall of the Roman Empire is naturally also referred to, often via its most famous portrayal, Edward Gibbon’s *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788). Together, all these images of lost and destroyed cities merge into the more abstract idea of a *necropolis*, also referred to in the title of the novel’s first section, “The City of the Dead”.

The most famous definition of *necropolis* is found in Lewis Mumford’s classic study *The Culture of Cities*, where he divides the “rise and fall of megalopolis” into six stages, of which the final is called “nekropolis”:

⁵⁰ The line is a quote from an early nineteenth-century missionary hymn, “From Greenland’s icy mountains”, written by Reginald Heber and composed by Lowell Mason. (Victorian Web. <<http://www.victorianweb.org/religion/hymns/heber1.html>> Last accessed 3 March 2016.)

War and famine and disease rack both city and countryside. The physical towns become mere shells. Those who remain in them are unable to carry on the old municipal services or maintain the old civic life: what remains of that life is at best a clumsy caricature. The names persist; the reality vanishes. The monuments and books no longer convey meaning; the old routine of life involves too much effort to carry on: the streets fall into disrepair and grass grows in the cracks of the pavement: the viaducts break down, the water mains become empty; the rich shops, once looted, remain empty of goods by reason of the failure of trade or production. [- -] The living forms of the ancient city become a tomb for dying: sand sweeps over the ruins: so Babylon, Nineveh, Rome. In short, Nekropolis, the city of the dead: flesh turned to ashes: life turned into a meaningless pillar of salt. (Mumford 1938, 291–292.)

In the epilogue of *Capital*, the reader is given a glimpse into London's possible future fall into the final stage of a megalopolis. There the city is seen from a helicopter hovering above it, and the pilot and his passenger are commenting on the carcass of the city below them.

'And how many of them are there down there?'
'Around two million they reckon from aerial closeups.'
'Two million people all living together like an anthepal!' [- -]
'It's Hongkong man, or Calcutta. They must get terrible epidemics. [- -]' (C, 221.)

The men's comments indicate that the ideal society of the world presented in the epilogue is a rural or at least a suburban one, based on an ecological way of life. Although the population of the city has there already fallen by over a five million compared to the population of London in the 1970s — when Duffy was writing her novel — the remaining two million still seems to be a frighteningly high number to the passenger who thinks "of his own house, like all the others he knew, detached in its own plot with solar heat plant on the roof and recycling for waste and water" (ibid.). In this future

world, cities are a thing of the past, and not just London, but also Paris, with its “[k]ilometres of weed and rusting iron between broken walls like a filmset” (ibid.).

Christine Wick Sizemore (1989, 228–229) also locates the prologue of *Capital* in the distant future. There “the island [is] overcrowded” and people spill “off the land into the sea like the fringes of a chenille tablecloth”, resembling “a lemming rush off the white cliffs from the hordes pressing behind” (C, 13). However, reading the novel nearly thirty years after Sizemore, the scene depicted in the prologue seems more likely to be a contemporary one, describing “the *Zeitgeist* of the post-imperial socio-economic downturn that was to facilitate the triumphant rise to power of the Iron Lady” (Groes 2011, 19; his italics). The prologue’s portrayal of an ecological Apocalypse with “stained corpses of oiled seabirds” on the shore and a “jetsam of immortal plastic artefacts” floating on the waves also resonates regrettably well with a twenty-first-century reader. Sizemore’s perception that the prologue and the epilogue are more pessimistic than the rest of the novel, including all the interludes, can easily be agreed to.

Although the novel ends with the dystopian scenes of the epilogue, the last line — “Or Hierusalem...” — gives a biblical glimpse of hope by referring to the possibility of a new heavenly Jerusalem, even if the city might at first follow the example of the Roman Empire and become “destroyed by decadence”, as Meepers fears in the novel (C, 222, 152; see also Sizemore 1989, 229).

The reading of *Capital* against *England*, Maureen Duffy’s study on the myth of England, published in 2001, offers further keys for interpretation. In *England*, Duffy examines the history of England from the Bronze Age to

the present, dismantling the myth of England⁵¹ and its many submyths. According to Duffy, these myths are “based on stories”:

The myth of England and the English is based on the stories we have told ourselves over the centuries, stories that make a montage of what we want to believe about us, and of how we wish to present ourselves to each other and the outside world. Some stories become an instant thread in the mythical tapestry, others are seemingly forgotten but can be revived when the myth needs a different thread to adapt to changing circumstances. (Duffy 2002, xi.)

The stories that function as building blocks of local and national myths are at the same time also the basis for collective memory, and, just as we as individuals may build our own identities upon stories and memories that others have told us about our childhood but which we cannot remember for ourselves, collective identities are also based on immemorial memories and stories, through which the community can become an “imagined community”, to quote Benedict Anderson’s definition of a nation (Anderson 2006, 5–7; see also Zerubavel 1999, 83). These stories may then metamorphose into the “unifying principle” of the place shared by the community as its common ground — into *genius loci* (cf. Knowlton 1928, 439).

In *Capital*, the stories of the interludes become the building blocks of the myth of London — and also the myth of London as a capital.⁵² Of the

⁵¹ Here, my usage of “England” follows the practice of Duffy in her *England*. However, she does note the toponymical ambiguity concerning the state name: “I can’t think of another state that has so many recognized versions of its name, in itself an indication of a confused identity that seems to need reinforcement by the highly centralized form of government of the last three centuries and the repeated affirmation of the national myth” (Duffy 2002, 2).

⁵² Julian Wolfreys (2004, 85) analyses the connotations of the novel’s title, *Capital*, noting the allusion to Karl Marx’s *Das Kapital* (1867–1883), and states that “Duffy’s work produces a material history of the capital that is irreducible to, and in excess of, any consideration of capitalist economics”. (See also Phillips 2006, 138.)

4 . T h e i m m e m o r i a l p l a c e

two protagonists, it is Meepers who in his empathetic approach to the city and its historical and archaeological layers has the ability to reach this myth and prove the existence of a continuity beyond the apocalyptic visions of a necropolis. If Martha and Ben in their tour around Westminster Abbey become personifications of the city's future and its resilience, Meepers, for his part, exhibits the attributes of a personification of *genius Londinii*.

4.3. The sinking inheritance in Peter Ackroyd's *The House of Doctor Dee*

Any slice or slide of London life, in other words,
would broadly mirror that of previous and succeeding
centuries. There has been no fundamental change.

—Peter Ackroyd: *London. The Biography*

4.3.1. Concentric reservoirs of time

Peter Ackroyd's obscure and enigmatic seventh novel, *The House of Doctor Dee* (1993) weaves its story on two alternate temporal layers, separated by four centuries: the present — or, to be more precise, the present of the novel's publication, i.e. the late twentieth century — and the late sixteenth century. Each of the layers has its own narrator-protagonist as well. The present action is narrated by Matthew Palmer, a young man in his late twenties, who inherits a mysterious house in London's Clerkenwell from his father, whereas the sixteenth-century episodes are narrated by John Dee, the famous Elizabethan mathematician, astrologer, and alchemist — who in the novel also happens to have owned Matthew's house in the past.

The employment of two or more alternating narrative levels — a technique which Ackroyd has also used in some of his other novels, for instance in *Hawksmoor* (1985) and *Chatterton* (1987) — is emblematic of the thematic and structural importance of time and history in Ackroyd's novels, manifested both by direct allusions and intricate narrative structures. Ackroyd himself has also commented on his preoccupation with time and history: "My own interest isn't so much in writing historical fiction as it is in writing about the nature of history as such. [- -] I'm much more interested in playing around with the idea of time" (*Contemporary Authors* 127,

3). For Ackroyd, time is like a “lava flow”, of which some parts “move forward, some parts [- -] branch off and form separate channels, some parts [- -] slow down and eventually harden” (Ackroyd 2002c, 343).

Consequently, Ackroyd’s concept of time has been the focus of several articles and studies concentrating on his work — even when the main interest has lain in other aspects of his literary output. Time in his novels has been characterized as cyclical (Miller 1987, 17; Lindberg 1994, 23–32; de Lange 1993, 153; Onega 1999, *passim*; Keen 2003, 121; Lewis 2007, 37), simultaneous (Hollingshurst 1985, 1049; Fokkema 1993, 175; de Lange 1993, 153), spiralling (Suomela 1997, 91), layered (Keen 2003, 121; Lewis 2007, 183; Suomela 1997, *passim*), Eliotesque (Hollingshurst 1985, 1049; Fokkema 1993, 173; Finney 1992, 247; Lewis 2007, 37), labyrinthine (Chalupský 2016, 74–81) and a continuum (Hotho-Jackson 1992, 116) — which, for its part, can be seen as resulting in the illusoriness of history (Fokkema 1993, 174) or suprahistoricity (Brax 2017, 79–122). On the other hand, the past in his novels has also been seen as unattainable (Finney 1992, 257). All of these interpretations are valid, yet none of them succeeds in reaching the whole truth, for Ackroyd’s concept of time seems to mutate and vary, slipping away from the grip of those who seek to capture it (see also Miller 1987, 17 and Lindberg 1994, *passim*).

In addition to time, place and its various effects have an important role in Ackroyd’s thinking, too. His obsession with the impact of a certain environment on the inhabitants shows in both his novels and his biographies, where he often aims to demonstrate the tight connection between his biographical subjects and their respective surroundings. Ackroyd has also explicitly expressed his belief in the dominating influence of place, the “*territorial imperative*, by means of which a local area can influence or guide

those who inhabit it" (Ackroyd 2002a, 448; my italics)⁵³. Ackroyd speaks of this imperative as both a "reverence for the past" and an "affinity with the natural landscape"; however, his own view of the phenomenon usually emphasizes the former aspect, where "the echoic simplicities of past use and past tradition sanctify a certain spot of ground" (Ackroyd 2002a, 449).⁵⁴ In his belief, the spirit of the place always reverberates with the past, being firmly connected to the history and traditions of the area (see also Chalupský 2016, 82).⁵⁵ Although Ackroyd has also, in a Montesquiean style, examined the pure ahistoric influence of landscape and climate, as for instance when writing on "the English melancholy" or the effect of the English weather on the native culture (Ackroyd 2002a, passim), his own personal idea of a *genius loci* almost invariably bears the mark of the previous generations. In addition to the three co-ordinates of the spatial setting, Ackroyd's spirit of place thus also requires the contribution of the temporal axis.⁵⁶

⁵³ Occasionally, Ackroyd has also used the term "topographical imperative" as a synonym for "territorial imperative" (e.g. Ackroyd 2000, 401).

⁵⁴ I would argue that Ackroyd's prioritization of past tradition over the natural landscape as the main component of the territorial imperative is partly due to his own urban background. As most of his novels are set in an urban location, the significance of nature is diminished in consequence.

⁵⁵ Ansgar Nünning (1997, 224; see also Brax 2017, 81) calls this characteristic "sementization of space". (NÜNNING, Ansgar 1997: Crossing borders and blurring genres: Towards a typology and poetics of postmodernist historical fiction in England since the 1960s. *European Journal of English Studies*, 1:2. 217–238.)

⁵⁶ Ackroyd has also used the term "chronological resonance" when referring to the influence of the past, modelling his concept on biologist Rupert Sheldrake's contested theory of "morphic resonance", which Sheldrake presents as an explanation for the influence of the "forms of previous systems" on the "morphogenesis of the subsequent similar systems" (Ackroyd 2002b, 339; SHELDRAKE, Rupert 2009 (1981): *A New Science of Life. The Hypothesis of Formative Causation*. London: Icon Books. Third edition. Page 119).

In Ackroyd's novels, this link between the spirit and the history of the place is often manifested like a palimpsest in the image of a time-stratifying place, where the *genius loci* of the present moment can be seen as the outcome of all the overlapping lines. At the same time, the layers of time, history, and memory may also offer the possibility of archaeological excavation, at least in a metaphorical and mnemonic sense.⁵⁷

One example of the effects of the palimpsestic layering of time in his novels is the observation of the representatives of a specific profession always living and working in the same quarter of the city. As Matthew in *The House of Doctor Dee* ponders on the density of watchmakers on Clerkenwell Road: "had they chosen this place, or had the place somehow chosen them?" (HDD, 17). Similarly, in the novel *Hawksmoor* (1985), detective Nicholas Hawksmoor speculates on the tendency of murderers and other criminals to remain in the same areas and wonders whether it is possible that "they were drawn to those places where murders had occurred before" (Ackroyd 1993a, 116). In his history of London, Ackroyd (2000, 401; my italics) presents this phenomenon as "an example of the city's *topographical imperative*, whereby the same activity takes place over hundreds of years in the same small area". According to him, these activities "dominated the character and the behaviour of those who took part in it, so that it can be said that the very earth and stones of London created their own particular inhabitants" (ibid.).

In *The House of Doctor Dee*, there are three concentric major *loci* in which the two temporal layers of the novel become pleated along the narration: the city of London, the eponymous house of Doctor John Dee and

⁵⁷ I have previously written more extensively on the time-layering images in Ackroyd's novels in my master's thesis *Kerrostumia, paikan henkeä ja arkeologiaa. Aikaa kerrostavan paikan kuvasto Peter Ackroydin romaaneissa* (1997), classifying the "traces of time" in his novels under the categories of palimpsest, *genius loci*, and an archaeological dig.

Matthew Palmer, and, inside the sixteenth-century version of the house, John Dee's library. In the beginning, the house seems to play the leading role in this game of time hoarding, and, for Matthew, it retains its importance throughout the novel. The significance of the city is then emphasized especially in the chapters narrated by John Dee, who is searching for traces of London's mythical past, and the role of the city becomes more important as the narration proceeds towards the final intermingling of the novel's temporal layers. Although the library represents the innermost *locus*, as a storage of historical and topographical knowledge it is also connected to Dee's quest for the immemorial city of London. Thus, in the following, I shall examine the emblematic and mnemonic potential of these three concentric *loci* in the process of remembering the immemorial *genius Londinii* as represented by Ackroyd.

4.3.2. The house of lost memories

In *The House of Doctor Dee*, the story coils around the house from the very first sentence: "I inherited the house from my father. That was how it all began." (*HDD*, 1.) When Matthew first comes to see the house, though, both the house and its neighbourhood are strange to him. Travelling to Clerkenwell by tube, he recognizes a "sense of change":

The stations along this route have always been less familiar to me; a slight adjustment is necessary, therefore, and I adopt another layer of anonymity as the train moves on [- -]. Each time the automatic doors close I experience a deeper sense of oblivion — or is it forgetfulness? (*Ibid.*)

The feeling of unfamiliarity persists when he arrives at the door of the house: "I knew that all this was now mine, but I did not feel I could claim

any possible connection with it" (*HDD*, 4). However, precisely due to its unfamiliarity, the house offers Matthew "a chance of freedom" (*HDD*, 9):

I could leave that terrible house in Ealing which had hampered me and injured me for the last twenty-nine years — for the whole of my life — and come to a place which had, for me at least, no past at all. (*Ibid.*)

Despite his reference to the childhood home in Ealing, Matthew actually remembers "very little" about his childhood (*HDD*, 80):

Sometimes it is hard to believe that I had [a childhood] at all. Even if I was lying on my deathbed, I doubt that I would recall anything more distinctly; it would be as if I had come into being, and passed away, within a night. (*Ibid.*)

Yet, to his surprise, he soon begins to discover traces of his oddly forgotten past in the house, for instance in the form of a wooden box full of his own childhood toys, hidden in a cupboard under the stairs. Other strange apparitions occur as well, as when Matthew's mother, during her first visit to the house, sees "some creature" (*HDD*, 87) moving near the basement door, or, when Matthew takes a bath and the bathtub suddenly seems to be transformed into another kind of liquid-filled container:

Then I lay in the water as I would lie upon a bed, but there was so much mist and steam around me that I seemed to be lying in some tube of opaque glass as the water poured over my face and limbs. And, yes, it was a dream, since I put out my arm and touched the glass with my barely formed fingers. (*HDD*, 88.)

When Matthew hears from his mother that he is adopted, he decides to examine more closely some old papers he has found in the house. The papers, written in his father's handwriting and titled "DOCTOR DEE'S RECIPE"

(HDD, 123), tell about a *homunculus*, an artificial creature destined to return every thirty years to its place of origin in order to be born again⁵⁸. Nearing his own thirtieth birthday, Matthew begins to believe that he himself might be the homunculus, and his friend Daniel Moore, who turns out to have once been his father's lover, finally confirms his doubts. This seems to explain the strange visions and remembrances that have captured Matthew's thoughts and dreams since his move into the house. Consequently, the spectres from the past of the house are at the same time also phantoms of his own childhood.⁵⁹ As Matthew gradually discovers the significance of the house for his own past he also finds out about the original owner of the house, Doctor John Dee, who is responsible for the making of the first homunculus. Thus, the house also functions as the narrative hub of the novel, connecting the two temporal layers, alternatingly narrated by Matthew and Doctor Dee.

The description of the house accentuates its symbolic significance. The house lies at the end of an alley, "sprawled across a patch of waste ground" (HDD, 2), and it seems slightly distanced from its surroundings. The unique position of the house as a link between centuries is emphasized by the peculiar exterior of the house. Each of the storeys appears to be of a different century, and, in addition, the house seems to be slowly sinking into the ground.

⁵⁸ In this respect, the life-cycle of the homunculus resembles that of the eponymous Golem in Gustav Meyrink's novel *The Golem* (1915), destined to reappear every thirty-three years on the streets of Prague. The figure of the golem is discussed more closely in chapter 6.3 below.

⁵⁹ *The House of Doctor Dee* could also in part be read as a "fantastic historical novel". For an extensive discussion on the genre — including also readings of Peter Ackroyd's novels *Chatterton* and *The Fall of Troy* — see Brax (2017, 55–166). See also Chalupský (2016, 65–114) for a discussion of Ackroyd's "uncanny London". Julian Wolfreys (2004) has also referred to the uncanny in connection with Ackroyd's writing.

I had assumed at first glance that it belonged to the nineteenth century, but I could see now that it was not of any one period. The door and the fanlight seemed to be of the mid eighteenth century, but the yellow brickwork and robust mouldings on the third storey were definitely Victorian; the house became younger as it grew higher, in fact, and must have been rebuilt or restored in several different periods. (Ibid.)

Furthermore, the ground floor and the basement differ from the rest of the house in that they extend beyond the area of the upper storeys and are “fashioned out of massive stone” and thus suggest “a date even earlier than the eighteenth-century door” (*HDD*, 3). As a result, the house has a bizarre appearance: it resembles “the torso of a man rearing up, while his arms [lie] spread upon the ground on either side” (*HDD*, 3). When Matthew approaches the steps, he feels as if he “were about to enter a human body” (ibid.) — a simile which can be read as a clue to the significance of the house for Matthew as well as a harbinger of the apparition from his past, the homunculus he is soon to meet. Later, Matthew and Daniel explore the basement of the house and discover that it is not a basement at all but in fact the former ground floor, which has “slowly sunk through the London clay” (*HDD*, 15). As an amalgam of different architectural styles, the house also seems to store time. As Daniel later remarks to Matthew: “Have you ever wondered why this area is so peculiar? [- -] It’s because all the time has flowed here, into this house, and there is none left outside. You hold all the time in this place.” (*HDD*, 82.) The house of Doctor Dee thus seems to be a truly ageless and also labyrinthine house, described even by Dee himself as “an ancient, rambling pile [which] would require another Minos to trace its regions” (*HDD*, 65).

The odd characteristics of the house and its role in Matthew’s quest for his own lost memories link it to the ideas of Gaston Bachelard, who in *The Poetics of Space* writes about the house as a protective “original shell”,

which shelters our dreams and memories both as an image and in reality (Bachelard 1994, 6). For Bachelard, the house is an “oneiric house”, where not just our conscious memories but also our un- or subconscious memories and our dreams are safely situated (ibid., 13, 15). In addition, the house in which we were born or spent our childhood is also physically inscribed in us, as “a group of organic habits” (ibid., 14).⁶⁰ Bachelard validates his use of the house as a “tool for analysis of the human soul” (ibid., xxxvii) by quoting C. G. Jung’s comparison of the human mind to a house — a comparison which has interesting resemblances to the house Ackroyd has built for his characters in *The House of Doctor Dee*:

It is as though we had to describe and explain a building whose upper storey was erected in the nineteenth century, the ground floor dates back to the sixteenth century, and careful examination of the masonry reveals that it was reconstructed from a tower built in the eleventh century. In the cellar we come upon Roman foundations, and under the cellar a choked-up cave with neolithic tools in the upper layer and remnants of fauna from the same period in the lower layers. That would be the picture of our psychic structure. We live on the upper storey and are only aware that the lower storey is slightly old-fashioned. As to what lies beneath the earth’s surface, of that we remain totally unconscious. (Jung 2014, 4335.)

In its capacity as a reservoir of time — both metaphorically and as a hybrid of different architectural styles — the image of the house of Matthew and Dee is a palimpsest where the more ancient strata can still be discerned beneath the newer layers. For Matthew, it is also a Bachelardian “oneiric house”, although partly of an inverse kind, as Matthew’s childhood memo-

⁶⁰ There are houses with clear Bachelardian echoes in Ackroyd’s other novels as well. These houses are often connected with a character’s childhood memories, whether conscious or subconscious, as for instance in his novel *First Light* (1989).

ries are almost non-existent and the house itself is strange to him. Still, inside the layered past of his house, Matthew has weird dreams which seem to refer to his own childhood — and to a homunculus. Although Matthew's amnesia about his childhood later receives a rational explanation as a form of repression when his mother hints that Matthew may have been sexually abused by his father as a child, Matthew himself interprets his mother's words on a more mystical level, on the basis of his dreams and visions, the papers he has found in the house, and the facts he has learnt about John Dee, the original owner of the house.

Yet, even more than an “oneiric house”, the house of Doctor Dee is a haunted house, closely related to the haunted houses of Gothic fiction, especially the so-called Urban Gothic of the nineteenth century, where gloomy urban environments and old family houses replaced the sublime landscapes and romantic castles of the eighteenth-century Gothic as the main loci of Gothic narratives (Botting 1996, 2–3, 11; Mighall 2003, *passim*; Wolfreys 2002, 7). The changing setting of Gothic fiction during the Victorian period reflected the shift in its deeper thematics, as the external objects of terror were internalized and, instead of exotic mountain ravines and dark dungeons, the narratives dived into the “murky recesses of human subjectivity” (Botting 1996, 10–11; see also Wolfreys 2002, *passim*). Along with this development:

[t]he city [- -] became a site of nocturnal corruption and violence, a locus of real horror; the family became a place rendered threatening and uncanny by the haunting return of past transgressions and attendant guilt on an everyday world shrouded in strangeness. (Botting 1996, 11.)

Consequently, a central element in the domesticated setting of the mid-Victorian Gothic — and, according to David Punter (1980, 52), “perhaps the most prevalent theme of Gothic fiction” — was the motif of a family

curse, where the sins of the father were visited upon his children and their descendants over several generations (Mighall 2003, 78–79). This “malevolent legacy” could manifest itself for instance in the form of hereditary diseases and other pathological symptoms or as burdensome memories and portentous documents from the past (Mighall 2003, *passim*).

The house of Doctor Dee — and of Matthew Palmer — resembles in many ways the haunted family houses of the nineteenth-century “homely Gothic” (Botting 1996, 113). The novel abounds with other stock Gothic elements, too, such as the old manuscripts Matthew finds in the house, the odd visions and dreams experienced by both Matthew and Dee, various ghostlike phenomena, and even a few appearances of a *doppelgänger* motif, for instance in a scene towards the end of the novel, where Matthew meets a crying child in the garden of the house and, to his horror, recognizes his “own face as a child” (HDD, 228). These Gothic motifs might thus also justify the reading of the novel as a postmodern Gothic pastiche (see also Keen 2003, 128)⁶¹.

Most importantly, Matthew’s inherited family house also seems to come with its own “family curse”, the legacy of the homunculus, the burden of which Matthew begins to feel as soon as he has moved into the house. Hence, the “house” of the novel’s title could also be read as the “family” of Doctor Dee — in accordance with the metonymic definition of a “house” as

⁶¹ Ackroyd’s inclination to pastiche has been repeatedly noted by various scholars (see for instance Onega 1999, *passim*; Keen 2003, 126; Lewis 2007, 127, 187; Nyqvist 2010, 167–169, 208, 210; Suomela 1997, 8). In *The House of Doctor Dee*, Ackroyd’s skills as a pasticheur are displayed particularly in the sixteenth-century chapters, written in a mildly archaic English. In this respect, as in its Gothicism and in the use of two parallel narrative lines, the novel resembles *Hawksmoor*. *Chatterton* is another impressive example of Ackroyd’s stylistic pastiches. Furthermore, Ackroyd’s aptitude for pastiche shows even in his biographies. For instance, in his biographies of T. S. Eliot and Charles Dickens, he deliberately imitates the styles of his biographical subjects (Ackroyd 2002d, 365–366; see also Brax 2017, 85–86). (NYQVIST Sanna 2010: *Double-Edged Imitation: Theories and Practices of Pastiche in Literature*. University of Helsinki.)

a lineage of “relatives by blood and marriage, dead, living, and yet to be born”, in possession of an ancestral home, and, especially during earlier centuries, providing a person with a sense of identity, “without which he [would be] a mere atom floating in a void of social space” (Stone 1977, 29, see also Mighall 2003, 85). Similarly, Matthew, too, by getting to know his house and his inheritance, is able to fill his personal mnemonic void and build an identity for himself — albeit a truly eerie one. However, at the same time, the house does also form a link between Matthew’s pursuit of his own personal history and Doctor Dee’s quest for a more collective immemorial past, the mythical city of King Lud, thus offering the possibility for an amplified reading of the role of the homunculus as well.

4.3.3. Excavating the city and the self

The word *homunculus* signifies “a little or diminutive man” and belongs to the terminology of the alchemists and especially that of the sixteenth-century physician and occultist Paracelsus, who had a theory concerning the artificial creation of human life in the form of a miniature human being (Idel 1990, 185; *OED*, s.v. “homuncule | homuncle, n.”; Scholem and Idel 2007, 737; Suler 2007, 600). Paracelsus was an important influence on the historical John Dee, who also had a complete collection of Paracelsus’s works in his library (Roberts 2004, *passim*; Schleiner 2004, *passim*; Woolley 2002, *passim*).

As for the character of John Dee, he is representative of Ackroyd's habit of fitting real historical figures into his fiction, often in a more or less remodelled but still recognizable form.⁶² Although they share several characteristics crucial for the theme and the plot of the novel, Ackroyd's Dee is not fully identical with the historical Doctor Dee. The real John Dee (1527–1608) — who along with his mathematical and astronomical activities also had a passion for, inter alia, Neoplatonism and Hermetic philosophy — was an eminent figure in sixteenth-century England and has even been called “the leader of the Elizabethan Renaissance” (Yates 2001, 93). He had many noble connections, and even the Queen, Elizabeth I, occasionally sought Dee's advice. During his travels in Continental Europe, Dee was also able to make contact with influential European contemporaries, for instance with the Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator. Dee is also known as a notable antiquary, whose library was among the greatest private libraries in Renaissance England. The house of the real John Dee was situated in

⁶² Other examples of this habit include for instance Oscar Wilde in *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde* (1983), architect Nicholas Hawksmoor in *Hawksmoor* (1985) — where the surname is given to a present-day police detective and the Hawksmooresque architect of the novel's seventeenth-century episodes is called Nicholas Dyer — the poet Thomas Chatterton in *Chatterton* (1987), the Victorian music-hall comedian Dan Leno in *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (1994), John Milton in *Milton in America* (1996), several important religious and political figures active in London in the year of 1399 in *The Clerkenwell Tales* (2003), and the essayist Charles Lamb in *The Lambs of London* (2004). In *The Fall of Troy* (2007) the character of archaeologist Heinrich Obermann is based on the real-life excavator of Troy, Heinrich Schliemann. This practice is closely linked with Ackroyd's other vocation as a prolific biographer whose subjects include eminent English cultural personages such as Thomas More, William Shakespeare, William Blake, Charles Dickens, and T. S. Eliot (see also Brax 2017, 85–86).

Mortlake, in the present-day London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, not in “the old centres of the city” (*HDD*, 1), i.e. in Clerkenwell, where Ackroyd — for obvious thematic reasons — has erected the house of his semi-fictive Doctor Dee. Ackroyd has also rewritten Dee’s marital history and allows Dee’s first, short-lived wife, Katherine to live long enough to meet Dee’s later assistant Edward Kelley, who then appears to be involved in the — again fictive — murder of Katherine.⁶³ Although the real John Dee practised alchemy and with Kelley even managed to produce some substance resembling gold, creating a homunculus was not one of his ambitions. (Roberts 2004, *passim*; Woolley 2002, *passim*.)

In the novel, however, the creation of the homunculus is described as the main alchemical endeavour of Doctor Dee and at the same time a parallel enterprise to his search for “the ancient seeds of London” (*HDD*, 169), the city of the mythical King Lud, described in the legendary annals of Geoffrey of Monmouth. The connection between these two undertakings is first highlighted when Matthew finds “Doctor Dee’s recipe” in a drawer, for, in addition to the recipe of the homunculus, the manuscript also includes a description of “passages in its life” (*HDD*, 123–125). The inventory of these “passages” meanders through the main events of the history of London, thus amalgamating the “little man” of Doctor Dee’s house and the “great city” whose ancient foundations Dee attempts to find (*HDD*, 10; 154).

John Dee’s interest in “Lud’s Town” (*HDD*, 155) is kindled halfway through the novel when Edward Kelley first comes to his door and tells him about mysterious old parchments, found within the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey and including “certain notes and peculiar marks relating to this island in ancient time, with various arithmetical rules and descriptions

⁶³ Barry Lewis (2007, 75) identifies the fictive Mrs Dee as John Dee’s second wife, Jane, whom the historical Edward Kelley tried to seduce; however, in the novel Dee calls his wife Katherine — which was the name of the first wife of the historical John Dee. (*HDD*, 71, 197–198; Roberts, 2004).

concerning the original city of London" (*HDD*, 152). Kelley also tells him about a "stone as clear as crystal" which was found in the same place and in which one might see "most excellent secrets" (*HDD*, 152–153). According to Kelley, the crystal ball is said to be "some token from the lost and ancient city of London". To Dee's great excitement, Kelley — who, like his historical counterpart, passes himself off as a spiritualist and a medium — reports that he has seen in the crystal ball "some ruined place where all former trade and traffic decayed", and, when Kelley then mentions four strange names found in the parchments, Dee's enthusiasm reaches new heights, for he recognizes the names as those of "certain Druids who founded the city of London" (*HDD*, 153).

Dee soon gets to see the parchment scrolls himself, and, from a geometric map drawn on one of them, deduces the ancient city of London to lie in Wapping, in East London. On their first visit to Wapping, Dee and Kelley end up on an empty and lifeless plot, yet Dee is certain that they have found the right place and only need some further advice from the spirits Kelley claims to see "*in crystallo*" (*HDD*, 153) to gain access to the ancient city and to "raise it above the ground" (*HDD*, 169):

Wherefore did I know that the city was once here? Because in my mind's eye I could clearly see it, with its fair buildings and gardens, its stone passageways and temples, now rising all around me on the cold Wapping marsh. I had read of it in the old chronicles, this city of giants, but now with the power of the place around me I conjured it in my imagination — all compact, and shining more than the rays of the sun. (*HDD*, 168.)

Dee and Kelley then set up on a project to discover how to enter the ancient city. Still, even after a year's worth of weekly crystal-gazing and several journeys to Wapping, the secret stays hidden. At this point, however, Kath-

erine raises the suspicion that Kelley's only motive is to steal Dee's alchemical work, and, when Kelley then allegedly poisons Katherine, Dee is forced to believe the grim truth about his assistant. On leaving Dee's house, Kelley reveals that all the visions he has claimed to have seen in the crystal ball have been deception and he has only been interested in Dee's alchemical secrets, including the homunculus, of which he has learnt only after moving into Dee's house.⁶⁴ As his final deed, Kelley burns Dee's laboratory and library, from which only the Bible is saved.

Despite the departure of the deceitful Kelley, visionary occurrences continue, and, towards the end of the novel, the two temporally separated narrative lines begin to converge⁶⁵, in order to finally meet in the visionary last pages of the novel, which reverberate with Eliotean⁶⁶ and Blakean harmonies and where the reader is lost in the polyphony of the reciting voices

⁶⁴ Here Ackroyd echoes the slightly questionable reputation of the historical Edward Kelley. However, the real John Dee obviously was satisfied with the services of his own house spiritualist, as their collaborative "angel séances" continued for seven years. According to Louise Schleiner (2004), "[t]he long-standing view of Kelley as a charlatan corrupting a credulous and innocent Dee is not supportable in the light of new scholarly study of the papers documenting their careers".

⁶⁵ The two narrative lines of the novel and their alternating temporal layers are also connected by the last and first sentences of each chapter. Ackroyd has also used this technique in, for instance, *Hawksmoor*, where the narrative fluctuates between the eighteenth and the twentieth centuries.

⁶⁶ T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* (1922) appears as an important subtext especially towards the end of the novel and in the last paragraphs of the novel's final chapter, "The Vision", with their direct allusions to Eliot's verses. On a wider thematic level, particularly Eliot's use of ancient fertility and vegetation myths in *The Waste Land* connects the poem to the motif of rebirth and continuity embodied in the figure of the homunculus. However, in addition to Eliot, other literary influences can also be discerned between Ackroyd's lines in *The House of Doctor Dee*. There is even a nugget of Bloomian "anxiety of influence" — albeit in a parodic form — in a metafictional passage, where Ackroyd himself appears to be uttering his obsessive fear "that whatever I happen to be writing comes from some other source, that I am stealing someone else's plot or words" (HDD, 222–223). Ackroyd has also referred to the anxiety of influence in *Chatterton* (Ackroyd 1993b, 100), where plagiarism plays a central thematic role, and the theme features strongly in *English Music* (1992) as well.

of Matthew, Dee, and Ackroyd himself. There at last Doctor Dee — but also Matthew and Ackroyd — discover a “holy city where time never was” (*HDD*, 272).

Thus, although the house of John Dee and Matthew Palmer appears as the narrative hub of the novel, the main locus is still London, the chief backdrop in most of Ackroyd’s other novels as well. The ways in which Ackroyd depicts London in his novels, as well as London’s central role in his literary universe, make the city a prime example of his time-stratifying places. Ackroyd presents the city as a visionary multi-storey construct whose wealth of historical and mnemonic strata supports and affects the lives of its inhabitants, who then reciprocally also mould the city by leaving their personal imprint on the urban texture. As Matthew ponders in Fountain Court in the Temple:

The sense of peace, even in the middle of the city, was so strong that I presume it came from some powerful event in the past. Or perhaps it was simply that people like myself had always chosen this place, and over the years it had accepted the stillness of its visitors. (*HDD*, 43)

Thus, in Ackroyd’s view, the historical and immemorial layers of the city are composed of all the past events that have occurred in the area over the centuries — and even millennia — and also of all the stories told and written about these events. This double composition of the temporal multi-storey strata of the city is then mirrored in the often deeply intertextual *multi-story* character of Ackroyd’s writing, present also in *The House of Doctor Dee*, in the form of the novel’s numerous intertextual allusions. Ackroyd’s London is a palimpsest not just as a time-stratifying place but as a huge literary parchment as well, as seen for instance in his remark on Dickens’s influence on the city:

Dickens's own vision of the city came to be added to the reality itself, so that a further note of darkness was added to the city. His own suffered experience became part of its fabric as well: when we see London now, it is in part his own city still. (Ackroyd 1991, 275.)

A central element of the literary mnemonic strata of Ackroyd's London are those writers, artists, and actors who "in their art have expressed the true nature and spirit of this place" (Ackroyd 2002c, 342). These "Cockney visionaries" include several of Ackroyd's biographical subjects as well as a few real-life models for his semi-fictional characters. For example William Blake, J. M. W. Turner, Charles Dickens, and the famous nineteenth-century music-hall comedian Dan Leno⁶⁷ are all named by Ackroyd as belonging to "the line of great Cockney visionaries", and even "the great Doctor Dee" receives a mention in a lecture Ackroyd gave on the topic in the early 1990s (ibid., 342, 344).⁶⁸ A common denominator of these artists is that they have, in Ackroyd's view, "recreated all the variety, the energy and the spectacle which this city expects and demands of its inhabitants", and they have "expressed the horror, too, for this also has been one of the dark places of the earth" (ibid., 342).

Considering the symbolic and metonymic significance of capital cities for their respective nation-states, it is perhaps not surprising that, for Ackroyd, too, London has also "from a very early period [been] a centre of national consciousness" (Ackroyd 2002a, 102; see also Raffestin 1993, 13). Consequently, Ackroyd's portrayal of the local "spirit" of the Cockney visionaries has a lot in common with his views on the "Englishness of English

⁶⁷ I shall return to the career of Dan Leno more closely in chapter 6.3.

⁶⁸ Although Ackroyd's list of "London luminaries and Cockney visionaries" centres mainly on past masters, he includes a few of his contemporaries as well, such as Angela Carter, Michael Moorcock, and Iain Sinclair, stating that instead of "talking about a dead or irrelevant past", he is "trying to disclose a definite pattern of continuity" (Ackroyd 2002c, 346).

literature” — a topic he first addressed in a lecture in 1993 and would later discuss more extensively in his survey of the English cultural heritage, *Albion* (2002). The leitmotif of both *Albion* and the earlier lecture is the “un-fashionable” extension of the “territorial imperative” to England and the English nation in general, and an important inspiration for Ackroyd is the notion made by Ford Madox Ford that “the whole of Anglo-Saxondom [is not] a matter of race but one, quite simply, of place — of place and of spirit, the spirit being born of the environment” (Ackroyd 2002a, xxi; Ford 1907, 43). As has already been pointed out earlier, for Ackroyd, the environmental spirit arises not from climate but from history.

In *The House of Doctor Dee*, the connection between the capital and the whole nation comes up particularly in Dee’s search for the lost city of London. In this respect, the association of the old parchments — containing the map of the ancient city — with Glastonbury becomes relevant. Glastonbury Abbey — or the Benedictine Abbey of St. Mary — was among the oldest monasteries in England, reputedly built as early as the second century AD. Rebuilt after a fire in 1184, it lasted until the dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII in 1539. The significance of its ruins for the English national mythology stems from its reputation as the alleged burial site of the mythical King Arthur as well as its association with St. Joseph of Arimathea and the Grail legend. (BA, s.v. “Glastonbury”; Carley 1994, 129–130.) Thus, for John Dee, the quest for the lost city of London equals reaching for the mythical origins of the whole nation:

But this ancient, long-buried and long-forgotten London was a wonderful great city, [- -] where many say that the holiest temple of this country stood. Then truly was Britain the incomparable island of the whole world. (HDD, 154.)

In the novel, the empty plot in Wapping is, however, not the only entrance to the mythical past of London and the nation. John Dee’s library — the

third and innermost time-layering locus of the novel — offers Dee, Matthew, and the reader another, more figurative portal to the immemorial past of the country. Although, according to Dee, “there lives no man that knows the entire truth of the British originals” (ibid.), at least in his own library Dee has a fine sample of the essential canon relating to the mythical past of the nation, with Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae* as its cornerstone: “[I]n this library lies something of the treasure of Britain’s antiquity” (HDD, 66). In Doctor Dee’s library, time becomes stratified in the form of all the works describing the immemorial and mythical past of the nation:

I drink at the true fountain because here I have around me the inheritance of our island. [- -] These volumes will be a continual silent presence not only for me, but for the posterity of many ages. (HDD, 67.)

As in the case of the city itself, the “spirit” of Dee’s library is thus made up of the layers of the past:

It is vulgarly said and believed that there are spirits who live in private houses and who inhabit old walls or stairs of wood; yet if there is a spirit in this library, it is the spirit of past ages. (ibid.)

Doctor Dee’s library is not the only library in the novel, though, nor is Dee the only one excavating the secrets of the past buried in old documents.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ In Ackroyd’s novels, there seem to be libraries galore, from smaller private collections of books and documents — such as Solomon Weil’s collection of cabbalistic and esoteric literature in *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* — to great public archives such as the National Archive Centre in *The House of Doctor Dee*. I have previously written more extensively on the libraries in his novels in my master’s thesis. (Suomela 1997, 70–81. See also Wolfreys 2004, 143, 156.)

Both Matthew and Daniel are historians by profession, practicing their research in archives and libraries. According to Matthew, there is a strong affinity among those who work among old documents:

There is a camaraderie that grows among those who work with old books and old papers, largely, I suspect, because we understand that we are at odds with the rest of the world: we are travelling backwards, while all those around us are still moving forward. (*HDD*, 13)

These archival time travels are important for Matthew also in their capacity to teach him something about himself: “[I]t is as if I were entering a place I had once known and then forgotten, and in the sudden light of recognition had remembered something of myself” (*ibid.*). The immemorial past of the archives thus seems to become a metaphorical oneiric house for him, bringing back memories to be relived in the present — especially when he utilizes his professional skills to find out about the previous owner of his hereditary house in the National Archive Centre. There the archivist tells Matthew about the ideas of the philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg, who, according to the archivist, once said that, after death, “each of us goes to a house and to a family — not the same ones we possessed on earth, [- -] but to the house and the family that correspond to our ruling passions” (*HDD*, 90). From this perspective, kinship is not defined by blood ties but by other affiliations, by “ruling passions” — or by place of residence, as in an anecdote about a young man, Dan Berry, who once came to the archive in search of his “true family” among the records:

Somehow these were people who had been like himself. [- -]
He was sure that they had all lived in the same area of London.
He came here believing that they had at various times inhabited the same street, or even perhaps the same house. (*HDD*, 91.)

4. The immemorial place

4.3.4. *Homunculus Londinii*

In its emphasis on time and the influence of the past — especially the influence of the territorial past — on the present, *The House of Doctor Dee* deals with the themes Ackroyd has also continued to discuss in his subsequent oeuvre. In all his novels and biographies, he is “concerned with that spectral and labyrinthine world where the past and the present cannot necessarily be distinguished” (Ackroyd 2002d, 368) and where the “lava flow” of time may take unexpected routes (Ackroyd 2002c, 343). In that world, “*continuity* is [- -] the key”, and “lines of continuity are to be found everywhere in London” (Ackroyd 2011, 73; my italics; Ackroyd 2000, 667; see also Wolfreys 2004, 124, 126).

The idea of continuity is the keyword also in *The House of Doctor Dee*, expressed in all of the novel’s time-layering loci as well as in the figure of the homunculus.⁷⁰ With the homunculus, Ackroyd has given the *genius loci* a mythical form, which links the nest of significant places in the novel: the city, the house, and inside the house also the great library of John Dee, which, with its vast collection of ancient texts and important historical classics, symbolizes both his scientific inheritance and the inheritance of the whole nation (see also Wolfreys 2004, 137; Groes 2011, 127). The theme of inheritance connects the spirit of these concentric places to the temporal axis that is a central element in Ackroyd’s conception of *genius loci*. The inheritance of the palimpsestically layered ages moulds the *genius* of the city, the house, and the library. Through Matthew’s pursuit of the truth of his own origins, the spirit of the city is approached from the perspective of an individual citizen, who seems to dissolve with the city, even

⁷⁰ Ackroyd himself has also referred to the theme of continuity in *The House of Doctor Dee* in his 1993 LWT lecture “London luminaries and Cockney visionaries” (Ackroyd 2002c, 350).

to become a *genius loci* himself, feeling that “there [is] some presence within [him] which [has] always existed in this soil, this stone, this air” (*HDD*, 42).

In her enquiry into *The House of Doctor Dee*, Susana Onega has analysed closely the links between the alchemistic philosophy behind the ventures of the historical Doctor Dee and the metafictional component reflected in the structure of the novel, equating “Ackroyd’s task as writer/creator in the two-dimensional world of paper and ink with that of Doctor Dee, the god-like creator of three-dimensional *homunculi* and *anthropoi*” (Onega 1999, 130). While this reading cannot be disputed, I also want to consider another kind of equation in the novel, i.e. the analogy between the cabalistic concept of Adam Kadmon, “or the Universal Man” (*HDD*, 45) and the role of Matthew as a *homunculus* representing not only in an ancient Roman manner the *genius* of his own family and house, but also the *genius* of the whole city – and, via the mythical lost city of London, “Lud’s Town” (*HDD*, 155), the whole nation. As Daniel had once explained to Matthew, “[t]he Behmenists believed [- -] that men and women carried the heavens within them and that the universe itself was in the shape of a single person; he was known as Adam Kadmon, or the Universal Man” (*ibid.*). Similarly, there is a correspondence between the microcosm of Dee’s house and its spirit, the *homunculus*/Matthew, and the macrocosm of the ancient and mythical city of London and its *genius Londinii*.⁷¹ As a mystical vagabond remarks in the final chapter of the novel: “The spirit never dies, and this city is formed within the spiritual body of man” (*HDD*, 273). The undying

⁷¹ The macrocosm-microcosm analogy is also discussed by the historical John Dee in his writings, for instance in *Propaedeumata aphoristica* from the year 1558 (CLULEE, Nicholas 1988: *John Dee’s Natural Philosophy. Between Science and Religion*. London: Routledge. Pp. 118; 131; 140; 149; 271, n. 4). Susana Onega has contemplated the occult philosophy of the historical Dee with praiseworthy precision (Onega 1999, 114–130).

genius Londinii — personified by Matthew and the *homunculus* — thus also manifests “London’s regenerative power” (Wolfreys 2004, 131) and fulfils the characteristics of a true *genius loci*, as described by Edward Relph (1980, 48; see also chapter 2.3 above):

Spirit of place can persist in spite of profound changes in the basic components of identity. [- -] The spirit of place that is retained through changes is subtle and nebulous, and not easily analysed in formal and conceptual terms. Yet at the same time it is naively obvious in our experience of places for it constitutes the very individuality and uniqueness of places.

4.4. The immemorial *genius Londinii*

From the point of view of this study, Maureen Duffy’s *Capital* and Peter Ackroyd’s *The House of Doctor Dee* share several salient characteristics. The most obvious one is, of course, their setting — both are essentially London novels, enclosed within the sound of the legendary Bow Bells⁷². Coupled with this is the strong temporal verticality of both novels, manifested in their avid reaching out to the immemorial past of the city. In *Capital*, the vertico-temporal axis of the novel travels through the chronologically layered interludes and spans 400 000 years from the death of the

⁷² The term “Bow Bells” refers to the bells of St Mary-le-Bow in East London, whose sound was used to define real Londoners: a Cockney was a person born within earshot of the Bow Bells. To quote a seventeenth-century travel writer, Fynes Moryson: “Londiners, and all within the sound of Bow-Bell, are in reproch called Cocknies, and eaters of buttered tostes”.

(MORYSON, Fynes 1908: *An itinerary written by Fynes Moryson gent. first in the Latine tongue, and then translated by him into English*. Volume 3, p. 463. <https://archive.org/stream/fynesmorysons03moryuoft/fynesmorysons03moryuoft_djvu.txt> Last accessed 29 April 2016. See also Ackroyd 2000, 72.)

Swanscombe (Wo)Man to the 1970s. In *The House of Doctor Dee*, the historical scope of the narrative is more vague, as Ackroyd lets his semi-fictive Doctor Dee refer to the legendary Brutus and his divine ancestry as the foundation of the city (*HDD*, 155). Still, the list of the major passages in the homunculus's life (*HDD*, 123–124) moves along a more historical trajectory from the Black Death to the Second World War and beyond.

Yet further parallels can be discerned, such as the characters of Meepers and Doctor Dee, both pursuing evidence from the city's distant past, as well as the informational assistance they receive from, respectively, the central computer of the college and the vast library of Doctor Dee's house. However, from the perspective of the present study, the most significant parallel phenomenon in the novels is their focus on urban continuity. In Duffy's *Capital*, the question about continuity is more concrete and its answer archaeologically verifiable, whereas in Ackroyd's novel, continuity is dressed in the skin of the mythical homunculus, regenerated along with the homunculus's rebirths.

In both novels, the idea of continuity also implies its negation. In *Capital*, this negation is presented in the form of the necropolis, seen in the dystopian epilogue of the novel, and, unsurprisingly, Ackroyd's version in *The House of Doctor Dee* has a lot in common with Duffy's urban nightmares. In *The House of Doctor Dee*, the possibility of continuity's nullification is illustrated in the list of the "passages" in the homunculus's life, which ends in a cautionary doomsday prophecy:

[The homunculus] has one great fear. If the cycle of the ages is not mastered by great scientists, then the end of time (which it prophesies for the year 2365) will be reversed. It knows then that the centuries will roll back and that humankind will return in stages to its beginning. The Victorian and Elizabe-

than periods will recur, and Rome will rise again before crumbling into the darkness of what we now call pre-history. (HDD, 125.)

Thus, in *Capital*, the negation of continuity comes through abandonment and decline, while in the world of the *homunculus Londinii*, continuity is nullified by reversal, ending not in a necropolis but in pre-history.⁷³

In her analysis of the uses of the past in contemporary British fiction, Suzanne Keen (2003, 127) remarks that “a version of history emphasizing continuity, recognition, and ‘roots’ may be labelled presentist” — i.e. “interpret[ing] [- -] the past through the lens of current concerns” (ibid., 108). This is a label which, to historians at least, is not “particularly complimentary”, for presentism either fails “to recognize the radical strangeness and difference of the past”, or uses “historical knowledge to serve present or future ends”. It is this attitude that marks off heritage from history, as, in contrast to history, “heritage is sanctioned not by proof of origins but by present exploits” (Lowenthal 1998, 127).

Duffy’s and Ackroyd’s emphasis on continuity thus seems to tilt their concept of the past towards the “presentist” category of heritage. Such is also Suzanne Keen’s reading of Ackroyd’s use of the past in *The House of Doctor Dee*:

The present in which we live becomes in Ackroyd’s handling a palimpsest of imagined pasts, recovered not for the sake of historical accuracy or revisionist narrative (though he sometimes achieves these goals along the way), but to heighten the

⁷³ In *The House of Doctor Dee*, the idea of the crumbling “Eternal City” is also suggested by a reference to the work of the eighteenth-century Italian architect and artist Giovanni Battista Piranesi, who in his etchings and engravings depicted the ancient ruins of Rome — the original *Urbs Aeterna*. (HDD, 43–45; FICACCI, Luigi 2000: Introduction. *Piranesi. The Complete Etchings*. Köln: Taschen. 8–49.)

sense of connection, continuity, tradition, and repetition.
(Keen 2003, 130.)

Historians might, indeed, flinch at the sight of the warning sign of presentism stuck on the forehead of heritage, for, as Raphael Samuel (1999, 260) notes, “heritage-baiting has become a favourite sport of the metropolitan intelligentsia, the literary end of it especially”. A novelist may, however, have another kind of perspective, for “heritage, no less than history, is essential to knowing and acting”, and, “[i]ts many faults are inseparable from heritage’s essential role in husbanding community, identity, continuity, indeed history itself” (Lowenthal 1998, xv). Heritage, together with “history, tradition, memory, myth and memoir” (ibid., 3), is one of our several links with the past, and may thus also be fruitful in the recognition of the spirit of the place. At least for both Maureen Duffy and Peter Ackroyd, *genius Londinii* seems to feed on heritage as much as on the other forms of immemorial collective past.

—5— Nurtured by place

The city has no centre other than ourselves.

— Orhan Pamuk: *Istanbul: Memories of a City*

5.1. Attached to place

I found myself running through the streets as if I possessed them. Somehow I had been present at their beginning; or, rather, there was some presence within me which had always existed in this soil, this stone, this air. (Ackroyd 1994, 42.)

Thus does Matthew Palmer, the protagonist in Peter Ackroyd's novel *The House of Doctor Dee* (HDD), discussed in the previous chapter, recall his feelings as a teenager, when he "first began to understand London" (ibid.). Young Matthew's deep sense of togetherness with the city he was born in is typical of how characters in Ackroyd's novels are tightly connected with their surroundings, occasionally almost to the point of personifying the place they live in, or even transforming into a *genius loci*. However, Matthew's experience is also typical on a more general level and familiar to

most people. Although it may not always amount to the degree of possession — as in the case of Matthew and London — many of us still feel a close attachment to our place of birth and growth. Even if life were to move us far away from our place of origin, chances are that the place would still not be moved away from us — or at least it would retain its significance, albeit in another sense (Gustafson 2001a, 672). And for those who stay the bond may grow even stronger. As the Turkish author Orhan Pamuk writes about his own hometown: “I’ve never left Istanbul — never left the houses, streets and neighbourhoods of my childhood. [- -] Istanbul is my fate: I am attached to this city because it has made me who I am” (Pamuk 2006, 6).

Doubtless due to its nearly universal applicability,⁷⁴ place attachment — defined in brief as an “emotional bond between people and a particular place or environment” (Seamon 2014, 26) — is an aspect of people-place bonding that has been studied with increasing intensity and from ever multiplying viewpoints over the past couple of decades (Lewicka 2011, 207, Manzo and Devine-Wright 2014, 15–16; Hernández, Hidalgo, and Ruiz 2014, 175–178; Patterson and Williams 2005, 361). Furthermore, preoccupation with the concept has not been limited to only the most obvious academic branches — such as environmental psychology or community design — but has spread to many other disciplines as well, including gerontology, economics, and leisure research (*ibid.*). As a phenomenologically rooted concept (e.g. Seamon 2014, *passim*), place attachment is also well suited to humanistic applications — although, as yet, they seem to be in the minority in place attachment research. Thus, the concept can also readily be appropriated for the purposes of literary studies.

However, just as the prevalence of place attachment as a human phenomenon has resulted in a multidisciplinary scientific discussion on the

⁷⁴ Although the phenomenon as such may be defined as universal, studies have shown that it is by no means uniform. (See section 5.2.3 below.)

topic, it has also contributed to a noticeable terminological confusion — “a broken jigsaw puzzle” of diverse place-related concepts, including *topophilia*, *rootedness*, *place dependence*, *place identity*, or, *sense of place*, to name a few (Lewicka 2011, 208). According to some critics, this may even have hindered the field’s progress (Counted 2016, 11; Giuliani and Feldman 1993, 271; Patterson and Williams 2005, 362). Furthermore, in addition to the “abuse of terminology” (Counted 2016, 11), theoretical development and methodology have been inconsistent as well (Counted 2016, *ibid.*; Lewicka 2011, *passim*; Manzo and Devine-Wright 2014, 17; Hernández et al. 2014, *passim*).

Still, despite the methodological and terminological confusion, the study of place attachment has strong phenomenological roots, echoing the anti-positivist approach of humanistic geography which emphasizes the role of place as a subjectively experienced location rather than merely an objectively quantifiable expanse (Ley and Samuels 1978, 11; Low and Altman 1992, 1–2; Lewicka 2011, Williams 2014, 127; see also above, chapters 1.2, 2.3, and 4.1). Broadly defined, the beginnings can already be found in Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*, first published in 1957. Later, in the 1970s and 1980s, interest in the emotional aspects of people-place bonding seemed to explode, with various ground-breaking early studies and anthologies published during those decades. (Low and Altman 1992, 1–2; Lewicka 2011, 207; Counted 2016, 9; Scannel and Gifford 2014, 43–44.) Many of these seminal studies, including Yi-Fu Tuan’s writings on “topophilia” — “the human love of place” (Tuan 1990, chapter 8) — and on the experience of place (Tuan 2001) as well as Edward Relph’s exploration of the human environmental experience (Relph 1980), represented the holistic-qualitative, phenomenologically based research tradition.

Parallel to the qualitative research trend, also an alternative line of place research emerged, focusing on quantitative measurements and analyses of people-place bonding and preferred especially in the fields of environmental and community psychology. (Lewicka 2011, 208; Manzo and Devine-Wright 2014, 18; Patterson and Williams 2005, *passim*.) Still a third tradition of place theory — “social constructivism” — has seen the people-place relationship as a predominantly social construct (Morgan 2010, 11). A general discussion on place attachment naturally benefits from the inclusion of the quantitative and the socially-oriented viewpoints along with the phenomenological-humanistic tradition (*ibid.*). However, in a literary context, the phenomenological viewpoint in particular, with its emphasis on subjective experience and on the affective qualities of our relationship to place, offers functional tools for examining the role and significance of place attachment in the life of the fictional characters.

In the present chapter, the focus will be on Peter Ackroyd’s novel *Three Brothers* (2013), a story of three London brothers, born soon after the Second World War, who follow different lifepaths in and out of London during the post-war decades, each of them in some way affected by the mysterious disappearance of their mother. In the analysis, I shall lean on the phenomenological research tradition, employing David Seamon’s (2012, 2014) generative model of six place processes. Seamon’s model, based on the dimensions of *geographic ensemble*, *people-in-place*, and *genius loci*, offers tools for both perceiving the dynamism and variety of place attachment and recognizing the role of *genius loci* in people-place bonding. However, in addition to Seamon’s phenomenological perspective, the similarities between place attachment and interpersonal attachment theories also become useful when exploring the metaphorical merging of the mother and the metropolis in the novel.

5.2. Surrendering to the city in Peter Ackroyd's *Three Brothers*

That is why I feel compelled to talk about London,
about the place from which I have come — which has
formed me and in whose life I myself can live.

— Peter Ackroyd:

“London luminaries and Cockney visionaries”

5.2.1. Children of London

In the London borough of Camden, in the middle of the last century, there lived three brothers; they were three young boys, with a year's difference of age between each of them. They were united, however, in one extraordinary way. They had been born at the same time on the same day of the same month – to be precise, midday on 8 May. (*TB*,1.)

The fairy-tale-like⁷⁵ first lines of Peter Ackroyd's *Three Brothers* (2013; henceforth referred to as *TB*) open the story of three London brothers,

⁷⁵ *Three Brothers* includes several classic fairy-tale elements. “Three brothers” itself is a typical folktale motif, and so is the disappearance of a family member, in this case the mother. The special role assigned to the youngest brother is a typical narrative element in fairy tales and folktales as well. Harry's experiences with his mother-in-law could also be classified into this category, for “mothers-in-law are important, traditional hostile mother-figures in folktales and fairy tales” (Lee 2008, 641). In *Three Brothers*, the folktale theme surfaces also in the many mystical ghost-like apparitions seen by the brothers as well as in the exotic stories told by the businessman character Asher Ruppta, who comes from a small island in the Celebes Sea. Unfortunately, the scope of the present chapter does not permit a

Harry, Daniel, and Sam Hanway. The coincidence of their shared birthday wakes up the interest of their neighbourhood and even the local newspaper, and people start to wonder if the brothers are “in some sense marked out”, or if there is “some invisible communion between them” (ibid.). As it happens, the neighbours’ intuition is correct, for, in the course of the novel, the reader will discover that there is indeed a hidden connection between the brothers, even though they lose touch with each other soon after entering adulthood.⁷⁶ Throughout their lives, there are moments when they suddenly seem to have a sensation that something significant is happening to the others, or, when one of them encounters a turning point in his life, the other two come immediately to his mind. Or, as Sam reports of his relationship with Harry and Daniel during his adult years: “Sometimes I think I see their reflections. Sometimes I think I see them across the street. I see them in my dreams all the time.” (*TB*, 91.) They are also, mainly unknowingly, connected by some of the other characters who are not always aware that these young men leading very different lives are actually brothers. Some of them have their suspicions, though, based on the brothers’ physical resemblance to each other. Still, despite the outward similarities, the brothers differ greatly from each other in “temperament” and “affection” (*TB*, 1).

more thorough analysis of this aspect of the novel. (LEE, Linda J. 2008: Mother-in-Law. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales. Volume II: G–P*. Edited by Donald Haase. Westport: Greenwood Press. 641–642. See also PROPP, Vladimir 1968: *The Morphology of the Folktale*. First edition translated by Laurence Scott with an Introduction by Svatava Pirkova-Jakobson. Second edition revised and edited with a Preface by Louis A. Wagner. New Introduction by Alan Dundes. Austin: University of Texas Press.)

⁷⁶ Petr Chalupský (2016, 95–97) discusses this aspect from the perspective of the uncanny.

As for the actual date of their shared birthday, in the fictional world of the novel it may be yet another coincidence that the brothers are born on the first three anniversaries⁷⁷ of VE Day — Victory in Europe Day — which marked the end of the Second World War in Europe on the 8th of May, 1945. However, on an interpretative level, that particular date marks the brothers as representatives of the London post-war generation, which happens to be a generation which Ackroyd himself also belongs to. Consequently, the age group of the Hanway brothers can thus also be read as the first indicator of the strong autobiographical component of the novel.

In fact, the opening lines of the novel contain still another inducement to an autobiographical reading of the novel, for the motif of a significant time of birth echoes the birth of David Copperfield, the eponymous hero of Charles Dickens's most autobiographical novel, published in 1849–50. Dickens's novel also begins with the birth of its protagonist, told in the first person by David himself:

To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously.

In consideration of the day and hour of my birth, it was declared by the nurse, and by some sage women in the neighbourhood who had taken a lively interest in me several months before there was any possibility of our becoming personally acquainted, first, that I was destined to be unlucky in life; and secondly, that I was privileged to see ghosts and spirits; both these gifts inevitably attaching, as they believed, to all unlucky infants of either gender, born towards the small hours on a Friday night. (Dickens 2009, chapter 1.)

⁷⁷ Going by later references to their ages, the brothers are born in 1946, 1947, and 1948. Ackroyd himself is born in 1949.

In *David Copperfield*, the character of David has been interpreted as a partial self-portrait of Dickens (e.g. Ackroyd 1991, 579; Flint 2001, 43–44; Smith 2001, 7). As Dickens is an important literary inspiration for Ackroyd, the opening paragraph of *Three Brothers* with its similarities to the equally fairy-tale-like birth of David Copperfield lends support for the interpretation that each of the Hanway brothers mirrors some central aspect of Ackroyd himself.

In many respects, *David Copperfield* can actually be seen as one of the pre-texts of *Three Brothers*. Both novels have the characteristics of a *Bildungsroman* as they follow the formative years and spiritual development of their protagonists.⁷⁸ David Copperfield as well as Harry and Daniel Hanway in *Three Brothers* all have a literary career, echoing the profession of their authors. In *Three Brothers*, Harry becomes a successful journalist, whereas Daniel studies and later teaches English Literature at Cambridge University. As for the youngest brother, Sam, he leaves school as soon as it is legally possible and from then on does all sorts of odd jobs ranging from a supermarket assistant to a gardener and a nightwatchman. Although Daniel, as a gay student of literature at 1960s Cambridge, could easily be seen as the most obvious self-portrait of the author, Ackroyd has assigned

⁷⁸ Of Ackroyd's other novels, *English Music* (1992) also fits in the category of *Bildungsroman* and has clear autobiographical elements (Lewis 2007, 66–67).

some of his attributes to the other brothers as well.⁷⁹ Thus, for instance Sam's at times visionary sensitivity to the essential nature of the city as a complex amalgamation of past and present can also be read as a reflection of the foremost passion of Ackroyd himself.

The motif of the loss of the mother connects the two novels as well. David Copperfield loses his mother first to her marriage to the cruel Edward Murdstone and later to death. As for the Hanway brothers' mother, Sally, she suddenly disappears when the boys are between eight and ten years old. Her disappearance is a major turning point in their childhood, and from that point on, the absent mother becomes the invisible epicentre of their lives, causing different reactions in each of the brothers

In addition to *David Copperfield*, there are allusions to Dickens's other novels as well, for instance in the form of clearly Dickensian names, such as "Sparkler", the name of a roguish character apparently named after Edmund Sparkler in Dickens's *Little Dorrit*. From a thematic viewpoint, another important novel by Dickens is *Bleak House* (1852–53), which also serves as an inspiration for the — at times unfailingly — Dickensian atmosphere of *Three Brothers'* London, as for instance in a scene where Daniel and Sparkler are walking back to Sparkler's flat from a pub: "There was

⁷⁹ Among the many autobiographical scenes of the novel, the chapter describing Daniel's participation in the annual party of a London publishing house "Connaught & Douglas" — an allusion to Ackroyd's own publisher Chatto & Windus — is particularly enjoyable in its self-reflective irony as well as in its vivid *roman à clef* satire of the literary circles of 1970s London. At the party, Daniel meets a successful young novelist Graham Maland, who bears a strong resemblance to Ackroyd himself. Behind his back, Maland is dismissed by a literary journalist as a "marginal figure" and a "Little Englander": "He's not a serious writer". (TB, 119.) Daniel also overhears a conversation mocking the recent appointment of "some teenage literary editor" to *The Spectator* — a magazine where Ackroyd himself worked as a literary editor in the 1970s. Earlier in the same chapter Ackroyd also lets Daniel vent his disappointment — and possibly Ackroyd's too — at the academic circles of Cambridge: "Jones has published an essay in some other journal. 'The Use of the Term 'Almighty' in Eighteenth-Century Sermons.' What is the matter with these people?" (TB, 112.) (See also Chalupský 2016, 270–274.)

fog in the street, spreading from the river; there was an acrid smell in the air, too, as if the fog were smoke from a bonfire. This was a damp and unwholesome place." (*TB*, 155.) The mood of the scene recalls the famous opening lines of *Bleak House*:

London. Michaelmas Term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. [- -] Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. (Dickens 1997, chapter 1.)

Overall, the importance of Dickens for both Ackroyd the Novelist and Ackroyd the Londoner shows throughout *Three Brothers* as it does in Ackroyd's other novels as well. Yet, there are allusions to Ackroyd's own novels, too, as there is a character named Sparkler also in Ackroyd's time-travel novel *The Plato Papers* (1999)⁸⁰, set in future London, in the year AD 3705, whereas the inhabitants of a nunnery in *Three Brothers* have namesake colleagues in Ackroyd's historical thriller *The Clerkenwell Tales* (2003). In effect, the novel's allusions to both *David Copperfield* and Ackroyd's own work bolster the autobiographical reading of the novel, in relation not only to Ackroyd's life and times but also to his relationship — and even attachment — to London.

⁸⁰ In *Three Brothers*, there is a direct allusion to *The Plato Papers*, when Sparkler playfully suggests that Daniel write down Sparkler's stories so that the collection could then be called "*The Sparkler Papers*" (*TB*, 82).

5.2.2. Released by the city

Ostensibly, the narrative of *Three Brothers* — divided from the second chapter on into alternating chapters for each of the brothers — twists around the murder of a successful but suspect businessman, Asher Ruppta, and a related case of blackmail, an incident to which all the brothers also have a connection. Ruppta has made his fortune in the property business and has also been involved in a bribery case along with a junior minister in the Department of Housing. Harry is interested in the bribery case as a journalist but is told to forget the story by the proprietor of the newspaper, who himself happens to be the blackmail victim of Asher Ruppta and Pincher Solomon, the owner of a betting shop chain. As for Daniel, his former lover Stanley works as a minor clerk in the Department of Housing and acts as a courier between Ruppta and the corrupt minister, whereas Sam gets a job as a nightwatchman in Ruppta's office building and later becomes Ruppta's messenger and rent collector. The three brothers are connected to Ruppta also via their mother Sally, who after leaving her family has been Ruppta's mistress and has also born him a son, Andrew. This particular connection, however, is not known to the brothers at first, and only Sam becomes aware of all the details concerning their mother's later life.

Eventually, though, the murder plot is of minor importance in the novel, and the murder actually remains partly unsolved in the end — although the blackmailed newspaper magnate, Sir Martin Flaxman, is implicated as the culprit.⁸¹ Thus, the novel is less of a thriller or a detective story than a story of the three brothers and their relationship to life, London, and

⁸¹ In his reading of the novel, Petr Chalupský (2016, 150–153), by contrast, emphasizes the significance of the crime elements of the novel.

their mother. In this ensemble, Asher Ruppta is a pivotal character, inter-connecting the other characters and also anchoring them and the narrative to the urban setting, for Ruppta's housing business rests at the core of the everyday life of the citizens and is also a practical prerequisite for the formation of place attachment between the city and its new residents. Ruppta's business is no charity work, though:

He was known as a brutal and rapacious landlord, buying up old houses and subdividing them into smaller and smaller flats that were then rented to immigrants from the West Indies. It was reported that he terrorised the older residents until they were forced to move out or to sell their properties to him. Then he would bring in new tenants and charge them exorbitant rents. His 'agents' always had bull terriers with them. (*TB*, 64.)

Asher Ruppta's death brings about a total reversal of his trade and also a big change to the lives of his tenants. His fortune is left for Sally to administer until their son Andrew, his sole inheritor, comes of age, and, contrary to Ruppta, Sally empathizes with the poor tenants and wants to "set up a fair rent scheme" (*TB*, 239) as well as offer housing for the homeless of the city.

In addition to Asher Ruppta, the slightly eccentric character of Sparkler also acts as a link between the other main characters of the novel. Daniel first meets Sparkler at a pub in Cambridge and they soon become lovers. They meet once a month in London, where Sparkler works as a male prostitute and lives as a tenant of Asher Ruppta. As Sam gets a job as Ruppta's rent collector, he too becomes acquainted with Sparkler, although he doesn't know about the connection between Sparkler and his brother Daniel until later. Harry's connection to Sparkler is more distant, for he only hears about Sparkler from his wife, Guinevere — the only daughter and heiress of Martin Flaxman — who is a social worker in the area and knows

Ruppta's tenants via her work. As it happens, Harry is also unknowingly connected to Sparkler via his father-in-law, who has been one of Sparkler's clients. Sparkler's stolen diary which contains the names of his clients is at the core of the blackmail case against Flaxman. Sparkler and Ruppta could thus be called "Connectors" — to borrow a term from Malcolm Gladwell⁸² (2001, 38–41) — i.e. people who "know everyone" (ibid.) and whose wide circles of acquaintances are partly behind the manifestation of the surprising coincidences that give rise to remarks like "What a tight little world, and a tight little city, this was!" (*TB*, 29).

Reading *Three Brothers* in the light of the six place processes presented by environmental phenomenologist David Seamon, the novel's emphasis on the "tight" interconnectedness between the various parts of the multi-layered urban web can also be interpreted as a suggestion of the collaboration between the city, its inhabitants, and the spirit of the city. As Seamon (2012, 4) notes, the people-place relationship has traditionally, especially until the 1980s, been defined dualistically, as a juxtaposition of people and environment, where either one may be the active force impacting the other. Later, along with the rise of the phenomenological geography in the

⁸² Malcolm Gladwell bases his ideas of the "law of the few" on the research of social psychologist Stanley Milgram, who in the late 1960s conducted experiments to test the so-called "small-world problem" and made the observation that the "starter" and "target" persons of his experiment could be connected to each other via just five or six intermediaries. Milgram's observations led to the now famous theory of "six degrees of separation", which, however, has in more recent studies also been criticized and judged to be "the academic equivalent of an urban myth" (KLEINFELD, Judith S. 2002: The small world problem. *Society*. January/February 2002. 61–66. 61. See also MILGRAM, Stanley 1967: The small-world problem. *Psychology Today*. Vol 1, No. 1. 61–67.)

1970s and 1980s, the dualistic view was challenged — but not outdone — by a more holistic perception of the people-place relationship, perceived as a monadic communion where human beings become existentially one with their lifeworld⁸³ (ibid.). To these perceptions of the people-place relationship as either a dyad or a monad, Seamon wants to add a triadic alternative, which “moves away from the hermetic wholeness of place and opens a view onto its processual dimensions” (ibid., 5). The most significant innovation of his model is the insertion of a third factor — “a place ambience or character”, i.e. *genius loci* — into the “experienced wholeness of people-in-the-world” (ibid., 4):

I recognize that both human beings and features of the physical environment contribute to place, but I also recognize the importance of place ambience and character. I therefore argue that the people-place relationship can be explored in terms of the three terms of *geographic ensemble*, *people-in-place*, and *genius loci*. (Seamon 2012, 10.)

Seamon perceives the alternative combinations of these three dimensions of people-place relationship as six cognate processes that have either a reinforcing or an eroding effect on the “lived structure and dynamics of a particular place” (Seamon 2014, 33). He groups the processes into three pairs, based on the role of *genius loci* in each process (Seamon 2012, 12–15). According to him, all six processes are equally important, even though there may be “gradations of intensity, quality, and duration”, depending on certain local and temporal conditions. Thus, each of the processes also has an effect on the “modes and intensity” of place attachment, which explains

⁸³ In phenomenological discussion, the concept of “lifeworld” refers to our everyday world, which we normally take for granted and which therefore remains largely unnoticed as a phenomenon (Seamon 2014, 27).

the apparent variation in people's emotional bonds with places. (Seamon 2014, 36–37.)

The first pair contains the processes of *place interaction* and *place identity*, both of which have *genius loci* (gl) as a moderating impulse between geographical ensemble (ge) and people-in-place (pp). *Place interaction*, illustrated by the diagram “pp—gl—ge”, refers to the “typical goings-on in a place”, embracing all the habitual affairs and situations that form the everyday fabric of life in a particular place (Seamon 2012, 13; Seamon 2014, 33). According to Seamon (2014, 33), “[i]nteraction is important to place because it is the major engine through which its users carry out their everyday lives and the place gains activity and a sense of environmental presence”. *Place interaction* also contributes to the forming of *place identity* (ge—gl—pp), by which we recognize a particular place as an integral part of our life and our personal identity (ibid., 33–34).

The next pair of Seamon's place processes includes *place release* and *place realization*, which both have *genius loci* as an initiating impulse of the process. In *place release* (gl—ge—pp), a “powerful *genius loci*” acts through place — for instance via “unexpected experiences, situations, and surprises relating to place” — resulting in people becoming “more themselves as individuals and groups [- -] through being part of place” (Seamon 2012, 15; Seamon 2014, 34). As for *place realization* (gl—pp—ge), there *genius loci* is expressed through the actions of people-in-place, resulting in the “realization” of place “as a unique phenomenal presence” (Seamon 2012, 15; Seamon 2014, 35).

In the last two processes⁸⁴, *place creation* and *place intensification*, *genius loci* is the outcome of the process. In *place creation* (pp—ge—gl), people bring about positive changes in a particular place, which results in the

⁸⁴ In Seamon 2014. The order of the processes varies in Seamon's articles.

strengthening of the spirit of place (Seamon 2012, 14; Seamon 2014, 35). In *place intensification* (ge—pp—gl), people and place exchange roles, so that place becomes the active agent and, through its positive effect on people-in-place, intensifies *genius loci* (Seamon 2012, 14; Seamon 2014, 36).

There are traces of each of the six processes in the London of *Three Brothers*. Yet, especially the process of *place release*, which in Seamon's (2014, 34) definition "involves an environmental serendipity of unexpected encounters and events", seems to correspond particularly well to the way the novel's urban ensemble — encompassing both the material conditions and the inhabitants of the city — operates in a synergistic mode. Beginning with the Hanway brothers' shared time of birth, surprising and strange coincidences abound in the novel and seem to be part of the deeper mechanism by which the city functions, influencing its inhabitants in the process. "Coincidences do happen", as a minor character tells Harry (*TB*, 26) — if they, on the other hand, are "coincidence[s] at all", as Daniel ponders in another scene (*TB*, 184).

Although, throughout the novel, several of the characters remark on the common occurrence of various surprises and coincidences, Daniel in particular seems to be notably conscious of the coincidental nature of urban life⁸⁵. He is also professionally interested in this aspect of the city due to a book project. After becoming acquainted with the staff of a London publishing house, Connaught & Douglas⁸⁶, he is commissioned by one of its editors, Aubrey Rackham⁸⁷, to write a book on "The Writers of London"

⁸⁵ The frequency of coincidences as an integral aspect of city life has been referred to by other authors as well, for instance by Michael Moorcock in his novel *Mother London*, to be discussed in chapter 6.2 below.

⁸⁶ This is an obvious allusion to Ackroyd's own publisher Chatto & Windus.

⁸⁷ The name of the editor is an example of Ackroyd's habit of playing with English cultural history: Rackham's name is composed of the names of two famous English book illustrators, Aubrey Beardsley (1872–1898) and Arthur Rackham (1867–1939).

(*TB*, 150). On hearing the topic Daniel is “perplexed and a little disappointed”: “He had been expecting Rackham to mention an academic topic, perhaps a book of literary criticism, or a new edition of a celebrated classic. The writers of London had never been part of the university curriculum.” (Ibid.) A poet friend of his is also sceptical: “So it won’t be a long book then” (*TB*, 151). However, Daniel sets to work and promptly prepares a synopsis. After that, he begins to look at the city from the viewpoint of the book assignment. For instance, when Daniel comes to London to visit Sparkler, who lives in the Limehouse area, he observes the area also in order to find material for a chapter which will discuss “the various novelists who had described the opium dens of the neighbourhood in the nineteenth century” (*TB*, 155).

In Daniel’s book, the significance of coincidences for the life of the citizens arises in the form of the book’s central theme, which concerns the “patterns of association that [link] the people of the city” (*TB*, 184):

[H]e had found in the work of the novelists a preoccupation with the image of London as a web so taut and tightly drawn that the slightest movement of any part sent reverberations through the whole. A chance encounter might lead to terrible consequences, and a misheard word bring unintended good fortune. An impromptu answer to a sudden question might cause death. (ibid.)

Daniel’s discovery can also be seen as a metafictional reference to Ackroyd himself and his own preoccupation with the idea of the city as a huge multilayered web, where real and fictive addresses, events, and characters are interconnected by a myriad of threads that criss-cross in all the four dimensions of time and space. In such an environment, the occurrence of ostensibly curious coincidences is bound to be more rule than exception.

Thus, the entanglement of fiction and reality permitting, *Three Brothers* itself could well be one of the subjects of Daniel's book.

However, even if Ackroyd himself were not to be found in the index of Daniel's book, Charles Dickens certainly is, and, from this particular perspective, especially on account of his novel *Bleak House*. In *Bleak House*, the narrative relies heavily on curious coincidences and unexpected connections between characters, an aspect noted also by Ackroyd (1991, 676) in his biography of Dickens: "Interconnectedness. [- -] Everything is combined, [- -]. Everything is touching else, so that it becomes impossible to know where the reality ends and the vision begins." The inclusion of *Bleak House* in Daniel Hanway's book on "the writers of London" is insinuated by a discussion which Daniel towards the end of the novel has with one of his Cambridge students. There the network of unexpected and curious coincidences in *Bleak House* is associated with the images of a prison and a labyrinth — both of them popular images in the study of literary urban representations in general as well as in Ackroyd's own writing:

'What we have to explain, in *Bleak House*, is the imagery of the prison.' [- -] 'It is perfectly obvious that, in most of Dickens's novels, the city itself becomes a form of penitentiary in which all of the characters are effectively manacled to the wall. If it is not a cell, it is a labyrinth in which few people find their way. They are lost souls.'

'But what then,' the young man in spectacles asked him, 'do we make of the continuing use of coincidence?'

'That is the condition of living in the city, is it not? The most heterogeneous elements collide. Because, you see, everything is connected to everything else.' (*TB*, 237–238.)

Caroline Levine (2009, 518) has read *Bleak House* in the light of modern network theories and notes that Dickens's novel "represents social rela-

tionships not as static structures but as constantly superimposed, conflicting, and overlapping relational webs”, consequently imagining “society itself as a network of networks”. Furthermore, the novel’s many networks can be interpreted as “distributed networks” — an appellation by network theorists for a network, where “any point can connect to any other point without needing to go through any central site or in any fixed order” (ibid.). As a result, all the characters of the novel can act as “nodes” in one or more of the different networks of the novel (ibid.). According to Levine (ibid., 520), some of the characters are even more interconnected than the others, acting as “hubs” — a term which network theorists use to denote nodes that are “more highly linked than others” and a kindred term to Gladwell’s “Connector”, borrowed above to describe the role of Ruppta and Sparkler in *Three Brothers* (Gladwell 2001, 38–41; see also above, section 5.2.1). Yet, these hyperconnected characters may still themselves be powerless against the authority of the network itself, as Levine (2009, 520) notes on *Bleak House*, which, according to her, “painstakingly works out the importance of impersonal (and transpersonal) networks over personal agency”. Thus, the supreme agency of the network begins to resemble the “powerful *genius loci*” of the process of *place release*, which by acting through various place-related surprises and coincidences influences the inhabitants and “releases” them “more deeply into themselves” (Seamon 2012, 15; Seamon 2014, 34).

In *Three Brothers*, the releasing power of *genius loci* shows in the life of each of the brothers. For Harry, by nature a pragmatist and an opportunist, the serendipitous coincidences are mainly linked to his professional life and include catching by chance a church arsonist in the act and later writing a profile on the arsonist, who as a boy used to “put out the fires” during the London Blitz. The profile wins a competition sponsored by the *Morning Chronicle*, and Harry is soon employed as a reporter in the *Chronicle* and

later becomes also the son-in-law of the newspaper's proprietor. As for Daniel, in addition to reflecting on the interconnected and coincidental nature of the city in his book, he gets to experience this aspect of the city also personally, in the form of chance encounters with old lovers on the streets of London as well as some surprising small-world connections between his apparently far-flung acquaintances.

Sam, for his part, could be characterized as a mystic and a visionary, who is able to connect not only with the three-dimensional everyday network of the city but also with the fourth dimension of the city's various temporal layers as well as with a kind of parallel network inhabited by tramps and beggars and a mysterious convent that seems to vanish and materialise along with the beggars. His ability to connect with the temporal layers of the city becomes evident especially in a very Ackroydian scene, where Sam observes an old stone post touched and patted by the people passing by:

He noticed a curious fact or coincidence — most of those who passed the post put out a hand and touched it. It was an unwitting, and perhaps even an unconscious, gesture. Yet the stone post was being endlessly patted and felt. As he continued watching the stone, it seemed to become aware of his presence. Sam was astonished when the stone rose several feet into the air; as it hovered there several ribs and pillars of stone, several arches and mouldings, began to exfoliate from it, creating an intricate shrine or shelter of stone. He thought he could hear the sound of hammering, of banging, of the labour of construction. Then it began to fade into the air. The stone post, once more a solitary presence, hovered above the ground before descending and resuming its original position. All this may have been the work of a moment. Or it may have taken many centuries. (*TB*, 45–46.)

On the other hand, Sam's experience with the stone post also has the characteristics of the process of place realization, where *genius loci* affects the inhabitants of the city directly, which then results in the city being "realized" as a "unique phenomenal presence as substantive as its environmental and human parts" (Seamon 2014, 35).

Like his younger brother, Daniel, too, is sensitive to the temporal multilayeredness of the city and is, for instance, able to perceive "in the lie of the territory" an older street meandering under the present-day street-plan: "it would always be here, with its own burden of mystery" (*TB*, 156). Daniel's sensitivity also seems to cover the auditory imprint of the past of the city, as when he suddenly hears "a most terrible scream" when walking in Limehouse with Sparkler. Sparkler, however, doesn't hear the voice: "I didn't hear nothing. [- -] I never have heard that scream. Some people have. Some people haven't. My grandfather heard it once." (*TB*, 155.)

In addition to the processes of place release and place realization, the processes of place interaction and place identity can also be discerned in some of the scenes in *Three Brothers*. The process of place interaction, for instance — defined by Seamon (2012, 12) as "'a day in the life of a place' or the place's typical unfolding" — can be seen and heard humming in the background, even during the most dramatic moments of the narrative, as when Harry in his final chapter commits suicide by jumping into the Thames from Westminster Bridge: "A dog barked somewhere. It was just an ordinary day." (*TB*, 232.) Or when Sam, wandering along the streets of the city after having visiting his rediscovered mother, suddenly pays attention to the urban bustle around him: "The air was full of noises — a football being kicked against a wall, the faint mosquito crackle of a transistor radio beside an open window, a car accelerating in the road, a child crying, all of them mingling together as the halo of the human world." (*TB*, 162.) Against the backcloth of the city's everyday unfolding, the characters can then

build their place identity, the intensity of which is, according to Seamon (2012, 13; his italics), usually directly affected by the strength of the spirit of place:

Typically, the stronger the *genius loci* of a place, the more robust and interesting that place is in terms of daily goings-on (i.e., the more numerous and stronger its manifestations of place interaction) and the more fondness and concern people have for that place (i.e., the stronger the presence of place identity and attachment, both for “insiders” and “outsiders”). In this sense, *genius loci* works to integrate place in two ways: First, it is the *inner* bond by which the constituents of a place all have their place (identity); second, it is the *outer* bond by which the constituents of a place are mutually related and interconnected (interaction).

Both place interaction and place identity are also interesting from the mnemonic perspective, as they are closely tied with the “place ballet” of “routine and bodily habit” and, thus, are also linked to the “habitual body memory”, as defined by Edward Casey (Casey 2000, 148–153; Seamon 1980, *passim*; Seamon 2014, 28, 33.; see also section 3.2.3. above). When Casey (2000, 189; his italics) writes about the “intimate relationship between memory and place” being realized “*through the lived body*”, he is referring to an event very similar to the synergistic ensemble of place interaction and place identity. Thus, the Hanway brothers, too, build their place identities upon their habitual body memories, which twine around the innermost core of their lives and memories, their childhood neighbourhood in “the London borough of Camden”, where “[t]hey recognised by instinct the frontiers to their territory” and where “within their own bounds they were entirely at home”: “They knew every dip in the pavement, every front door, every cat that prowled along the gutter or slumbered on the window sill.” (*TB*, 1, 3.) Still, their first memories differ, and later also the intensity

of their attachment to their place of origin varies in a way that also reflects their attitude to the disappearance of their mother as well as their reactions at the surprising reunion with her again: “Had their respective memories ever come together, they might have had some understanding of their shared past. But they were content with these fragments.” (*TB*, 4.)

5.2.3. The mother and the metropolis⁸⁸

From the viewpoint of the present chapter — as well as the novel under scrutiny — the attempts to integrate place attachment and interpersonal attachment theories are especially interesting. At the base of these explorations lies the acceptance of the centrality of bonding for the human experience: our inclination to form significant relationships is not only limited to person-to-person attachments but extends also to broader social groups as well as to inanimate objects and wider physical environments (Scannel and Gifford 2014, 42). It is thus not altogether surprising that comparisons between the theories of interpersonal and place attachment have indicated some important similarities, such as permanence and longevity of the attachment, feelings of security and contentment when in proximity to the attachment figure, and experiences of anxiety and grief when separated from the attachment figure (*ibid.*, 46–47; Morgan 2010, 18–20). In addition, like interpersonal attachment, place attachment can also serve as a support for the emergence of identity and the psychological development of the self (Morgan 2010, 19).

⁸⁸ As Sara Wasson (2010, 144) notes, “[m]aternal personification is a staple of London writing”. This shows also in Michael Moorcock’s *Mother London*, discussed in chapter 6.2 below.

However, the two types of attachment have some important differences as well. For instance, although interpersonal attachment — as an innate human trait — is a universal phenomenon, with place attachment there seems to be more variation as to the nature and intensity of the attachment as well as its importance for a person (Chawla 1986, 40; Morgan 2010, 20). Place attachment also appears much later during childhood than the attachment to an attachment figure (Morgan 2010, 20). Furthermore, in interpersonal attachment, there is always another human being acting as the object of attachment — the first attachment figure of the child being usually the mother⁸⁹ — whereas in the case of place attachment, there is no identifiable human attachment figure, although people may still have feelings of reciprocity regarding their relationship with an important childhood place in particular, thus assigning the place itself the role of an attachment figure (ibid.; Scannel and Gifford 2014, 47–48).

The comparison of the two forms of attachment has also shown how the development of place attachment parallels the formation of human attachment, at least in childhood, which, for the present, has been the main focus of research (Morgan 2010, 18; Scannel and Gifford 2014, 50). The development of place attachment has thus been seen either as a straightforward expansion of the child's initial "secure base" from the primary carer to the family home and then further outward, or, as a synchronous process with the development of interpersonal attachment, where the two

⁸⁹ The attachment figure does not necessarily need to be one's mother, though. Fathers as well as other caretakers, relatives and friends can also fill the role of an attachment figure. (Scannel and Gifford 2014, 47.)

types of attachment reinforce each other as the child moves cyclically from the security of the caregiver to explore the environment and then again returns to seek the soothing proximity of the carer (Scannel and Gifford 2014, 50; Morgan 2010, 14–15).⁹⁰ Either way, Yi-Fu Tuan's (2001, 29) description of the infantile development of human place bonding summarizes the significance of the mother as the secure base of the process and provides a guiding light for my subsequent analysis of Ackroyd's *Three Brothers* as well:

How does a young child understand place? If we define place broadly as a focus of value, of nurture and support, then the mother is the child's primary place. Mother may well be the first enduring and independent object in the infant's world of fleeting impressions. Later she is recognized by the child as his essential shelter and dependable source of physical and psychological comfort. A man leaves his home or hometown to explore the world; a toddler leaves his mother's side to explore the world. Places stay put. Their image is one of stability and permanence. The mother is mobile, but to the child she nonetheless stands for stability and permanence. She is nearly always around when needed. A strange world holds little fear for the young child provided his mother is nearby, for she is his familiar environment and haven. A child is adrift — placeless — without the supportive parent.

Tuan's words on the significance of the supportive parent fit well to describe the situation of the Hanway brothers after their mother's sudden disappearance. Until then, the Hanway brothers have led "a London childhood", typical of the post-war period with "deserted tracts of land" and "abandoned bomb shelter[s]" substituting for a playground (*TB*, 2). They

⁹⁰ However, it should be noted that despite the focus of research on childhood place bonding, the development of place attachment continues throughout adulthood, the form and intensity of the attachment depending on the amount of residential mobility during one's lifetime (Rowles 1983; Hay 1998).

have lived “securely in their world of brick and stone” (*TB*, 3). Yet, the sense of security is shattered when one day, upon arriving at home after school, they discover that their mother is not there anymore. Although they gradually get used to the new situation, her disappearance is a shock for all three, and especially for Sam:

They explained nothing to their school companions or to their teachers. On the matter of their mother, they were wholly silent. Something — something vast, something overwhelming — had happened. But they could not speak of it. (*TB*, 8–9.)

Their father, Philip, does not want to speak about the disappearance, either, although it seems to the boys that he knows more about his wife’s situation than he admits. The neighbours are curiously quiet on the matter, too, as if they were not aware of Sally’s absence at all. In the end, the disappearance of Sally Hanway remains a mystery to the boys for well over a decade.

The brothers continue living with their emotionally distant father, who works as a nightwatchman in the City of London. Later on, he gets a job as a long-distance lorry driver on a route between London and Carlisle, spending even less time at home with his children. Originally, though, he dreamt of becoming a writer, but the stories he starts never get completed. When the brothers grow up, Philip seems to transfer his unfulfilled ambitions onto them, and especially onto the shoulders of Daniel, who moves to Cambridge to begin his studies of English Literature.

After his older brothers have left home, Sam continues living with his father and stays at his childhood home even after Philip dies of a heart attack. The death of their father is also the final stop for their childhood communion, as, after a six-year break, the brothers meet for the last time at his funeral: “‘It’s been a long time,’ Harry said. [- -] We weren’t a family any more.” (*TB*, 37.)

The truth about Sally Hanway's disappearance first dawns on Harry, when a comment by a clerk at the magistrate's court on his surname impels him to examine the court's files, where he finds a document on his mother's trial and conviction: Sally Hanway has been found "guilty of soliciting and of offending public morals" and has been sentenced to a three months' imprisonment (*TB*, 19). Harry is shocked by the information and realizes that his father as well as the neighbours have been aware of the truth from the start. Harry also decides to move away from his childhood home, as he feels that he cannot remain there any longer after finding out the truth about Sally. From that point on, he tells everyone that he is an orphan and that his parents were killed in a car crash. He even denies his brothers and claims to be an only child. When Sally then suddenly comes to the office of the newspaper and asks to meet her son, Harry's colleagues are naturally surprised. Sally wants to explain to Harry the reasons behind her working as a prostitute — the need for extra money for the family — as well as her disappearance — she left the family of her own accord after her imprisonment.

As for the middle brother, Daniel, he never learns the actual truth about his mother and never meets her again, either. The only thing he ever hears of the event is his father's claim that Sally "ran away with another man" (*TB*, 35).

Eventually, only Sam is forgiving towards his mother. Sam first has a fleeting sight of Sally in a supermarket where he is working as an assistant after leaving school. In his consternation, he lashes out at a rude client and is dismissed from the job. His next sighting of Sally is in a nearby church, "Our Lady of Sorrows" — the same church where Harry met the arsonist — where Sally has come to pray. Sam follows his mother from the church, and after watching her doorway for a few days from the other side of the street, he goes to her door. From then on, he keeps in touch with his

mother, visiting her regularly and ultimately moves in to live with her and his half-brother in the house of the murdered businessman, Asher Ruppta.

The Hanway brothers' different reactions to their mother's disappearance — and, in the case of Harry and Sam, to her return — seem to reflect their different attitudes to their hometown as well, thus lending support to the reading of the relationship between these two attachment "figures" as partly metaphorical. Daniel, who moves to Cambridge and only visits London from time to time, also has the most neutral attitude to Sally's absence. He seems to content himself with Philip's explanation of her running away with another man. He contemplates the fact from afar, just as he observes London from an objective and academic perspective for the purposes of his book. Furthermore, he does not even observe the real city itself but is instead interested only in its fictive representations by "the writers of London". Daniel also distances himself from his place of growth by discarding his cockney accent even as a teenager:

He disliked his father's faint cockney accent, especially since he had gone to some trouble in removing all traces of his own. He had managed to hypnotise himself. He had drawn a large black dot on the ceiling of his narrow bedroom, and stared at it with concentration until he felt his ordinary awareness slip away. Then he repeated certain words out loud — cornflake, lunar, rain — without any London intonation. (*TB*, 34–35.)

His embarrassment at his background also impels him, when returning from school, to get off the bus a couple of stops before his home, in order to distract his friends from finding out his real address.

As for Harry, although he denies his family, he is not ashamed of being a Londoner and even takes professional advantage of his background:

His ready charm, his affability, and his London accent distinguished him from the mass of ex-public-school boys who

staffed other gossip columns. He looked, and sounded, as if he could be trusted. He soon impressed his superiors with his ability to deliver ‘scoops’ over his rivals. (*TB*, 55–56.)

His opportunistic attitude to life only occasionally shows signs of cracking. One of those rare moments is during his visit to the poor districts of Limehouse with the daughter of Sir Martin Flaxman, Guinevere, who later becomes his wife. Guinevere — named after the wife of the legendary King Arthur — wants to be a social worker and is being trained in the district. The visit troubles Harry and he “surreptitiously” leaves some money on the table of a poor family (*TB*, 103). One reason for his distress may also be his chance sighting, through the window of the poor family, of his brother Sam walking on the street. What Harry doesn’t know is that Sam has been visiting their mother, who also lives in the same area.

Harry’s innermost vulnerability is revealed to the reader only towards the end of the novel, in the paragraphs leading to his suicide. The events preceding his drastic decision also suggest an intriguing interpretation of his emotional bonding with his mother as well as with his place of growth. Harry’s father-in-law and the proprietor of the newspaper, Martin Flaxman, has suffered a stroke — supposedly because of the stress caused by the blackmail case and the murder of Ruppta — and become a bed patient. His wife, Lady Flaxman, has therefore taken the reins of the company, for only on Sir Martin’s death can they be handed over to his daughter, Guinevere. Lady Flaxman has then talked Harry into expanding the newspaper business — and soon also into an affair with her. When Lady Flaxman threatens to tell her daughter about the affair she is having with Harry, Harry kills his mother-in-law in a sudden fit of rage. When Harry leaves the Flaxmans’ house with Lady Flaxman’s strangled body lying in its drawing room, he suddenly seems to sense the city around him more deeply than before:

He left the house and, closing the front door very quietly, he walked across the street towards the Thames. As he approached the river he stopped, and looked around. It was a dry clear day, and the air was very still. A small flock of pigeons, animated with one purpose, landed on the green that lay between the house and the river. He started walking on the embankment road, thinking of nothing. His mind was completely clear and untroubled, doing nothing more than receive the impressions of the world around him. (*TB*, 231–232.)

However, Harry is also receptive to the more disturbing aspects of the urban everyday life around him and apparently loses himself in the urban bustle:

There were sounds all about him — horns, whistles, bells, shouts and cries surrounded him. He might have drowned in the clamour. Yet he had the strangest sensation that all this noise emanated from himself. He was the source of the commotion. (*TB*, 232.)

To momentarily return to Seamon's place processes, discussed in the previous section, one could perceive Harry's feelings in this final scene as an extreme example of the process of place identity, where a person "come[s] to feel a part of place and associate [his] personal and group identity with the identity of that place" (Seamon 2014, 34). In Harry's case, too, this process is assisted by the process of place interaction, with a typical "day in the life of the place" unfolding around him, oblivious of the dramatic twists and turns of Harry's day:

As he approached the rail overlooking the river, he wondered what Sam and Daniel were doing at this particular moment. He tested the rail with his hand, and as Big Ben tolled midday, he eased himself across it and jumped into the water. A dog barked somewhere. It was just an ordinary day. (*TB*, 232.)

The interpretatively intriguing aspects of Harry's final day turn around the character of Lady Flaxman and his function in the narrative. From Harry's perspective, Lady Flaxman can actually be seen as another mother figure — despite her also becoming Harry's lover. This interpretation is substantiated by the way in which Lady Flaxman herself emphasizes her motherhood to Harry, for instance by reminding him of the forthcoming Mother's Day: "It has always been a sacred day in my book" (*TB*, 230). Thus, if Lady Flaxman is seen as a mother figure also from Harry's point of view, her death then represents the killing of the mother, the primary attachment figure of a child. Although Harry has not distanced himself from his background and from his place of growth in the way Daniel has, he has nevertheless denied his family of origin, including his biological mother, who once left him without an explanation. Harry's last moments thus also signify the final merging of the figures of the mother and the metropolis.

At the moment of his death, Harry is thinking of his brothers and their whereabouts. As it happens, conforming to the fairy-tale character of the narrative, Daniel also dies at the same moment of a heart attack in his lodgings at Cambridge, soon after having discussed Dickens's *Bleak House* and the interconnectedness of urban life with a student. His death seems to be connected to the surprising sight of his naked ex-lover Sparkler playing small drums on the lawn beneath his window. In the previous week, Daniel has been in London recording a literary panel show for the BBC, and after the recording, he has spotted Sparkler drumming as a busker at the Liverpool Street tube station. The sight has distressed Daniel deeply, and Sparkler and the feelings he rouses also seem to be connected to the sensations the urban environment triggers in Daniel's mind: "[H]e felt the pavement beneath his feet, and the obduracy of London began to enter him" (*TB*, 235). Thus, here, too, a character begins to "feel part of place" (Seamon 2014, 34).

A couple of weeks earlier Daniel had renounced Sparkler in a publication party of Connaught & Douglas because he was afraid that his homosexuality would become more widely known in the literary circles he had just entered. However, in the novel, the character of Sparkler represents not only Daniel's queerness but also his Londonness, for, like Daniel, he too is a Londoner born and bred. As Sparkler tells Daniel in an earlier scene: "There is nothing about London I don't know. I'm on first-name terms with the sparrows and very chummy with the pigeons. I'm like a black cab. I get about." (*TB*, 151–152.) Thus, Daniel's renouncement of Sparkler symbolizes also his rejection of his place of birth and growth and equals the removal of all traces of London intonation from his speech. Yet, like Harry, in the end Daniel can't escape his origins either.

As for Sam, his relationship with his mother — and with his place of growth — is different from those of his brothers. Despite being the most affected by their mother's disappearance at the time, he doesn't blame Sally when they finally meet again, but instead is only curious to hear Sally's version of the story. After that, when he begins his weekly visits to Sally, he "[looks] forward to hearing his mother's voice": "It was nothing she said in particular, but the soothing syllables of her conversation induced in him a feeling of repose." (*TB*, 90.) Sam's feelings towards his mother thus confirm her role as his primary attachment figure: in her vicinity, Sam feels secure and content, and when she disappears, feelings of anxiety follow. Thus, in the final chapter of the novel, when Sally has suddenly disappeared again, the adult Sam, too, becomes restless and anxious:

As soon as Sam was awake, earlier on that same day, he sensed that Sally had already left the house. He was always aware of the presence of his mother; he felt more settled then, and more assured. Why had she left at such an early hour? When after two hours she had still not returned, he grew more alarmed. (*TB*, 239.)

This time, though, Sally has not disappeared for good but has only gone to find out more about the details concerning Ruppta's death. When Sam returns home that evening — which happens to be the day both his brothers die — he finds that Sally has returned, too. That night, Sam dreams about his brothers: "In his dreams that night, the three brothers were sitting in a darkened space that had no palpable boundaries; then they began to disintegrate, like clouds, and to become part of the darkness" (*TB*, 243).

However, even though Sam survives the day, his final destiny remains partly open to the reader and appears to be tied to a mysterious convent attached to the church of Our Lady of Sorrows. The convent appears and vanishes at random, taking with it a group of tramps and beggars who come to the convent to get food and shelter. Sam meets the nuns for the first time on the day of his visionary experience with the old stone post. He has come to the church to pray and is surprised to find that there is a convent, too:

He had not known that there was a convent attached to the church of Our Lady of Sorrows. [- -] If you had asked any of the local residents about the nuns, they would not have known how to answer. No one knew when, or from where, they had come. They had always seemed to be part of the neighbourhood. But they were rarely seen. (*TB*, 49.)

Sam feels safe and secure in the church and returns there every day, and one day the abbess of the convent, Mother Placentia, asks him to become their gardener and handyman. He also volunteers to hand out bread and soup for the beggars and feels at ease in their company, for he considers himself a wanderer as well. The tramps also seem to be conscious of the fact that one day the convent will disappear again and take them with it. Sam doesn't believe their words, until, one day, the convent really has disappeared:

The convent was gone. He looked for signs of the tramps and beggars who had wandered through the neighbourhood; they, too, had vanished. He asked several people if they had seen the nuns, but they looked at him curiously and shook their heads. Nuns? What nuns? (*TB*, 54.)

The next time Sam hears from the nuns is on the day following his brothers' death, when he gets a letter from the convent asking him to come back to work for the nuns again. "Dear Sam, We appreciate all the work you have done for us. Come back at any time. We have been waiting for you." (*TB*, 244.) Those are also the last words of the novel.

In conclusion: from the perspective of the attempted amalgamation of the theories of place attachment and interpersonal attachment, the experiences of Sam in particular offer a fine opportunity to examine the ways in which Ackroyd entwines the identity of his characters with the spirit of the place. In the semi-fantastic world of the novel's surreally interconnected London, the characters build their personal identities and develop their emotional bonds with their nurturing place of growth via "surrendering [themselves] to the city" (*TB*, 241), as Sam does when searching for his mother for the last time. In *Three Brothers, genius Londinii* thus appears as a collective mother figure, represented by all the different maternal characters of the novel: the vanishing nuns, Virgins, mother-cum-prostitutes, mother-in-laws, and Mothers.⁹¹

⁹¹ Here my interpretation of the relationship between the novel's characters and *genius Londinii* differs from the reading of Petr Chalupský (2016, 185), who sees Sam as a personification of London's spirit, whereas in my reading Sam functions more as a visionary channel through which the maternal spirit of the city becomes actualized.

5.3. Metropolitan choreographies

It would seem natural to assume that place attachment is a purely private matter, that it is only connected to an individual memory and based entirely on the life experiences of an individual person. Yet, as Peter Ackroyd's novel *Three Brothers* proves as well, that is actually not the case. Especially in the case of an urban life, individual memories and experiences are very seldom completely private. In *Three Brothers*, this communal aspect of place attachment is shown particularly in the way in which the paths of the different characters cross each other creating an urban symphony of strange coincidences. The intersections of these coincidentally crossing paths can then, in turn, be seen as nodes or joints where the individual lives adhere even more tightly to place.

The significance of coincidences for the life of an urban resident arises in some other London novels, too, for instance in Michael Moorcock's *Mother London* as well as in Peter Ackroyd's *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*. This network of coincidentally crossing paths of the citizens' daily lives resembles David Seamon's concept of "place ballet": "a larger-scale environmental ensemble" which consists of "an interaction of individual bodily routines rooted in a particular environment that may become an important place of interpersonal and communal exchange, meaning, and attachment" (Seamon 2014, 28; see also section 5.2.2 above). Seamon (2014, 33) sees place ballet as one form of place interaction as the actions of individual persons merge with the encounters and interchanges between people "through bodily co-presence" in place.

The endless continuation of this place ballet also involves the element of time and consequently the element of memory as well, and time — especially in the form of length of residence — has also shown to play a major

role among the various predictors of place attachment (Hay 1998, 5; Smaldone 2006, 47–48, 54; Lewicka 2014, 77–78). In other words, our “emplaced” and remembered experiences contribute significantly to our emotional affinity towards the place in question (Lewicka 2014, 79). The terms “sense of place” and “autobiographical insideness” have also in some instances been used synonymously in this connection, denoting the feelings of at-homeness, security and belonging, developed as a result of a long residence in a place and contributing to the identity of a person (Hay 1998, 6; Rowles 1983, 303).

“Autobiographical insideness” is a term that defines Ackroyd’s *Three Brothers*, too. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, there are several autobiographical elements in the novel, and, accordingly, the novel not only tells about the place attachment of its characters but is also a document of the degree of attachment Ackroyd himself feels towards his place of origin. The same naturally goes for many other autobiographically coloured novels as well, and a classic example in London literature is the fictional universe of Charles Dickens, in which the author’s attachment to his place of growth shows on many levels — but which can also be read as a record of the more traumatic experiences of Dickens’s own personal choreography within the great place ballet of the metropolis.

In the present chapter, the focus has thus been on the more traditional⁹² type of emotional place attachment, resulting from a long-time residence in a place and connected especially with our implicit or non-declarative memories, including the procedural memory of habits and automatic, daily routines (see Lewicka 2014, *passim*; see also chapter 3.2.3. above and

⁹² I am here following Maria Lewicka’s (2014, 76) division between “traditional” and “active” types of place attachment, corresponding to the distinction between sedentary versus mobile relationships to place. Per Gustafson (2001a, *passim*; 2014, 62) uses the terms “place as roots” and “place as routes” to denote the same distinction. I shall return to the “active” type of place attachment in chapter 7.

section 7.2.3 below). Still, the correlation is not entirely straightforward. Despite the importance of length of residence as a predictor of place attachment, a lifelong stay is not an indispensable prerequisite to the formation of a close bond with a place. As both Lewicka (2014, *passim*) and Gustafson (2001a, *passim*; 2014, *passim*) have demonstrated, there are also other variations of place attachment, influenced by different forms of memory and connected to a more mobile way of life. I shall return to these variations in chapter 7.

—6—

The spirit of the suffering city

Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears,
even if the thread of their discourse is secret,
their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful,
and everything conceals something else.

— Italo Calvino: *Invisible Cities*

6.1. The threatened city

Awake! then, O London, awake! open thine eyes; draw thy curtains; come forth of thy bed; look out of thy windows. Apparitions! apparitions! [*sic*] strange sights to be seen. Behold! heaven is opened, and God is come down upon earth, clothed with garments of lightning: God is come down in his majesty, and looks upon London with a terrible countenance: Behold the amazing terror of God in the late strange and prodigious judgments. (Vincent 1832, 170.)

When in 1667 the Revd Thomas Vincent wrote his first-hand account of the “Two late Dreadful Judgments of PLAGUE and FIRE in LONDON” (ibid., ix) — the Great Plague of 1665–1666 and the Great Fire of 1666 — such ordeals were still mostly perceived as instances of the wrath and revenge

of God (Landa 1992, 274). In the case of London's *anni horribiles*, this interpretation seemed to be further corroborated by the sightings of two comets in 1664 and 1665, witnessed also by the fictive narrator of Daniel Defoe's documentary novel *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722):

I saw both these stars, and, I must confess, had so much of the common notion of such things in my head, that I was apt to look upon them as the forerunners and warnings of God's judgements; and especially when, after the plague had followed the first, I yet saw another of the like kind, I could not but say God had not yet sufficiently scourged the city. (Defoe 1992, 21.)

Thus, in Defoe's novel, too, the plague was seen as a collective calamity, and even the heaven itself prophesied the coming of the rightful punishment upon the sinful city — or, in Vincent's opinion, on the sinful nation, for he saw both afflictions as national judgements, which were cast on "the metropolis of the land" as a retribution for the "deluge of profaneness and impiety" which, according to Vincent, had surged over the whole land (Vincent 1832, 74). Accordingly, for instance in Defoe's *Journal*, "it is the survival of London that matters", not so much the destiny of an individual citizen (Novak 1992, 306).

Although modern readers might probably disagree with Vincent and his contemporaries on the divine causes of the tribulations of 1665 and 1666, they would most certainly agree on the collective nature of the suffering. The ordeals of the Great Plague and the Great Fire were communal disasters where not only the individual citizens but also the city and the nation as communities were threatened by the virulent bacteria and the greedy flames. As such they settle into a long continuum of various mass trauma events, ranging from natural catastrophes — such as the Great Lisbon earthquake of 1755 — to human-induced calamities — such as the air

raids of the Second World War or the terror attacks of the 11th of September 2001 in New York. This continuum of real-life communal ordeals has then in turn inspired the growth of a parallel continuum of countless literary representations of the ordeals, from Thucydides' account of the plague of Athens in 430 BC in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* (ca. 400 BC) to Don DeLillo's 9/11 novel *Falling Man* (2007) and beyond.

In London, too, the plague and the fire of the 1660s gave rise to manifold descriptions, both documentary and fictive — and even poetical, as in John Dryden's long poem *Annus Mirabilis* (1667). The trials of Londoners did not end there, however, and thus also the unofficial literary genre of the Londoners' communal suffering has endured to the present day. More recently, especially the years of the Second World War under the constant threat of German air raids — the Blitz — have inspired authors from Elizabeth Bowen's 1940s novels and short stories to Sarah Waters's *The Night Watch*, published in 2006.

The apocalyptic images of the London Blitz form the narrative and thematic nucleus also in Michael Moorcock's novel *Mother London* (1988; henceforth referred to as *ML*), to be analysed in chapter 6.2. *Mother London* is an episodic novel weaving together voices of London's past and present in the minds of three mental hospital outpatients whose central symptom is their proneness to hear voices, or, read minds. Their ability to act as a channel for other citizens' thoughts and memories functions as a narrative tool by which the novel delineates a portrait of the spirit of the city, based on a collective memory of the city's shared myths. Among these myths, the myth of the Blitz — i.e. the myth of the city's collective resilience in the face of the German threat — is the most powerful. At the same time, the protagonists' aural hallucinations can also be partly read as examples of returning traumatic memories caused by the extreme experiences of war.

However, in addition to threats caused by extrinsic elements, there are also instances when the communal threat seems to originate from within the city, in the form of crime and social unrest. In London — as well as in many other urban districts around the world — such internal threats gained strength especially in the nineteenth century, as a result of industrialization and the fast growth of urban population, with ensuing housing problems, unemployment, and poverty (Clark 2009, 290–292; Worthington 2005, 118). This process of rapid urbanization produced the milieu documented by Henry Mayhew in his detailed and sympathetic survey of the life of the Victorian lower-class Londoners, *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851), and the same setting was also portrayed in fictional form in the novels of Charles Dickens. The same milieu also inspired the evolution of the modern detective novel as well as the rise of the Urban Gothic, where the castles and exotic landscapes of the earlier Gothic fiction were replaced by the dark and oppressive labyrinth of the urban streetscape (Botting 1996, 2–3, 11; Mighall 2003, *passim*; see also section 4.3.2 above; Worthington 2005, 103–169). Thus, in the shadowy corners of Victorian London’s more obscure districts, one could, with bad luck, cross paths with a serial killer on the loose, as happens to the victims of the mysterious “Limehouse Golem” in Peter Ackroyd’s historical thriller *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (1994; henceforth referred to as *DL*), to be discussed in more detail in chapter 6.3 below. In the novel, the spirit of the city gets the shape of the “The Golem of the Limehouse” (*DL*, 6), a mythical creature connected — at least in the minds of the late nineteenth-century Londoners — to a series of brutal murders in the East End of London, a series whose impetus seems to emanate from the city itself.

6.2. Hearing voices of a blitzed city in Michael Moorcock's *Mother London*

6.2.1. Picking up the drone of the Blitz

[T]he Germans came wave upon wave, in unimaginable numbers. The bombers maintained their formations as tightly as any Roman phalanx and the sound of their engines was a constant oscillating drone. Already the black smoke boiled up from the docks and the shrieking sky had turned a terrible pinkish yellow, the colour of a rose. [- -] The sisters remained fixed in their embrace, unable to take their eyes from the east and the monstrous fires. "They'll lay waste the whole of London." (*ML*, 231.)

In a sunny Saturday afternoon in September 1940, Londoners faced the first one of over 350 air raids⁹³ to torment the capital during the next nearly four and a half years, until the end of the Second World War in the spring of 1945. The first full-scale raid of the 7th of September 1940 was preceded by a summer of sporadic bombings of airfields and other critical targets near the coast and around the capital – the so-called Battle of Britain – but except for a few misplaced bombs dropped on the East End in the end of August, central London had thus far been spared from a direct attack. (Ackroyd 2000, 737; Inwood 1998, 783–786, 809; Withington 2010, 23, 38.) Although the bombing of the capital had been anticipated, an attack on civilian targets still managed to surprise the British commanders and thus the German Luftwaffe could fly its 320 bombers and 600 fighters over London almost unopposed during that first attack (Inwood 1998,

⁹³ In addition to the 354 air raids by piloted aircraft, there were also nearly 3000 raids by pilotless bombs, especially towards the end of the war (Inwood 1998, 809).

786). Important targets — gas works, power stations and the docks — were hit, first in East London, “Target Area A”, and later during that day and night also in the City, Westminster, and Kensington. As a result, vast areas of eastern London were ablaze with intense fires caused by oil bombs and incendiaries; 430 Londoners were killed and a further 1600 seriously injured. (Ackroyd 2000, 737; Inwood 1998, 786; Palmer 2000, 139–140; Withington 2010, 23–24.)

This fiery overture to the London Blitz forms the setting for the core scene of Michael Moorcock’s episodic novel *Mother London*. The first waves of German bombers darken the London sky in the structural mid-point of the novel, where one of the novel’s three protagonists is hurrying in the capacity of a freelance Air Raid Warden to deactivate an unexploded bomb dropped in the garden of two spinster sisters. The same scene, divided into two chapters, is also the novel’s narrative focus. On a wider scale, the whole war and the Blitz — including the air raids from September 1940 to May 1941 and the so-called “Baby Blitz”⁹⁴ of flying bombs and rockets from June 1944 to March 1945 — form the thematic nucleus of *Mother London*. Although the partly achronologically arranged episodes⁹⁵

⁹⁴ “Blitz” derives from the German term Blitzkrieg, “lightning war” (Inwood 1998, 784; OED, s.v. ‘blitz’). The term “Baby Blitz” or “Little Blitz” was adopted for the latter phase of V1 and V2 missile attacks during the last year of the war. (E.g. HODGSON, Vera 1976: *Few Eggs and No Oranges*. 391. Quoted in Inwood 1998, 806.)

⁹⁵ *Mother London* has a skilfully constructed symmetrical narrative structure. The novel is divided into six parts, the first of which, “Entrance to the city”, introduces the main characters in four chapters, including one chapter for each protagonist, plus a common, opening chapter, entitled “The Patients”. The last part, “Departure of the citizens”, is a mirror image of the first one, with an eponymous chapter for

of the novel are mainly set in post-war London, still the war and its fires cast their glow on the protagonists even until the mid-1980s. Each of the three main characters has gone through a life-changing experience during the war and the shadow of this experience stalks each of them closely through the post-war decades. At the same time the echo of the Blitz sounds like a bourdon note at the background of the rich polyphony of all the intersecting post-war London lives in the novel, its memory in a way resembling the “constant oscillating drone” of the German bombers over London on the 7th of September 1940 (*ML*, 231). In the following pages, I shall first concentrate on analysing the manner in which the echo of the war manifests itself in the traumatic memories and symptoms of the three main characters, after which, in section 6.2.3, I shall proceed further to discuss the concept of communal resilience and the function of the protagonists’ memories and experiences in building the myth of the Blitz and the spirit of the city.

The use of an aural metaphor to describe both the central theme and the narrative strata of *Mother London* is supported by the novel itself. Post-war popular music has a central role for one of the three protagonists, and all of them suffer from a mental condition whose central symptom is their proneness to “hear voices” – or “read minds”, as they themselves describe

each of the main characters in reversed order, followed by the last chapter of the novel, “The Celebrants”. The four middle parts of the novel — “High Days”, “The Unheard Voice”, “Fast Days”, and “The Angered Spirit” — are comprised of episodic chapters dated into diverse years from the mid-1950s until the mid-1980s, half of them named after London pubs. The chronology of these middle chapters undulates in two symmetrical temporal waves between the beginning of the Blitz in 1940 and the year 1985. Mark Scroggins (2016, 110) has called *Mother London* a “modular” novel, as the individual chapters are connected to neither the preceding nor the following chapters. According to Moorcock himself, in *Mother London* he decided to “follow true sonata form” with the “same shifts of mood and pace, slow movements, fast movements, jolly ones and sad ones, that are demanded of a classical symphony” (GREENLAND, Colin 1992: *Michael Moorcock: Death Is No Obstacle*. Manchester: Savoy. 103. Quoted in Scroggins 2016, 110).

their condition. According to one of the characters, they are “almost always able to guess what people are thinking”, revealing “powers bordering on the supernatural” (*ML*, 18–19). Only each other’s thoughts they refuse to hear. These voices are effectively muffled by medication, as long as the patients do not forget or intentionally omit their doses. On a textual level, these thoughts or “voices” — which occasionally include the protagonists’ own thoughts as well — interrupt the narration in a haphazard manner, printed in italicized paragraphs that verge on a stream of consciousness:

She should have been here by now I suppose this means I was expecting if her mother wasn't so bloody stupid there was this murder and the woman was going to hang that's it the Lyon's Corner House they must be as old as the hills my dad played in the gypsy orchestra they had bass fiddle not that row I won't listen to the news I won't listen to the news I won't listen to the news I won't listen to the news I won't listen to the news I won't listen to (*ML*, 69–70)

In the first chapter of the novel, entitled “The Patients” and supposedly set somewhere around the mid-eighties, the main characters are introduced as the outpatients of a London psychiatric clinic, gathering for a session at the clinic along with a group of minor characters whose destinies are at least partly knotted together with those of the main characters. The oldest of the main troika is a jovial thespian, Josef Kiss, bulky both in personality and appearance. “With a minimum of talent”, Kiss has “earned his living in almost every aspect of the theatrical profession”, ranging from mind-reading acts to later appearing in TV commercials (*ML*, 41). At the beginning of the war, Josef is rejected from the Home Guard and from the Volunteer Fire Service because of his medical record and decides to become a “freelance roving Warden” (*ML*, 243). When the German bombers fly over London on the 7th of September 1940 — a day which is described in the two middle chapters of the novel, “Late Blooms 1940” and “Early Departures 1940” —

the then twenty-six-year-old Kiss happens to be in Kilburn, in north-west London, and arrives at a church, whose vicar soon sends him to help two peculiar spinster sisters, Beth and Chloe Scaramanga, who have got an unexploded German bomb in their garden. With only a rudimentary knowledge of the anatomy of explosives yet with a capacity to “as it were, read [the bomb’s] primitive mind” (*ML*, 258), he manages to deactivate the bomb and to save both himself and the Scaramanga sisters’ pretty little cottage. This feat of valour is a significant event for Josef Kiss personally and, as already noted, the scene also marks the narrative and structural focus of the novel.⁹⁶ Later during the Blitz, Kiss saves hundreds of air raid victims from the ruins with an assurance that astonishes his fellow air raid wardens. As one of them recounts: “He had a knack of finding people who were still alive, didn’t matter how deep or how long they’d been buried. He was like a bloody dog, only better.” (*ML*, 291.) It is hinted that his ability to hear the thoughts of other people is the secret behind his successful rescue work.

For David Mummery — another one of the three protagonist-patients — the war has been a memorable event as well. Mummery is the youngest of the three, born — like Moorcock himself⁹⁷ — “about nine months before the beginning of the Blitz” (*ML*, 21). David’s transformative experience belongs to the “Little Blitz” (or “Baby Blitz”) near the end of the war, in the early part of 1944, when, as a five-year-old boy, he is narrowly saved from a hit by a German V2 missile⁹⁸ which destroys the buildings in front of him as well as a host of other pedestrians, leaving only a horrifying assortment

⁹⁶ Moorcock himself has called this particular scene the “pivot” of the novel (GREENLAND, Colin 1992: *Michael Moorcock: Death Is No Obstacle*. Manchester: Savoy. 105. Quoted in Scroggins 2016, s. 111).

⁹⁷ Michael Moorcock was born in December 1939.

⁹⁸ In the 2016 edition of the novel, the missiles are mostly called only “V-Bombs”, instead of the more accurate “V2” used in the Scribner edition of 2000.

of building debris and human body parts around him. Later, as an adult, he has a newspaper photograph of a V2 rocket framed on his wall, as his “private *memento mori*” (*ML*, 6). As a teenager, David plays banjo in a skiffle group and grows to become an “urban anthropologist”, living by “writing memorials to legendary London” (*ML*, 5). Apart from also occasionally hearing voices, David’s mental symptoms include various “visitations”, particularly of ghosts of eminent British historical figures (*ML*, 158–159). In addition, he believes himself to be able to “predict the future” (*ML*, 19).

The third member of the main troika has undergone the most enigmatic experiences of all during and after the war. As a seventeen-year-old young mother, Mary Gasalee is miraculously saved from a fire caused by a direct hit on her home during another notorious air raid by the German bombers in the night between the 29th and 30th of December 1940.⁹⁹ Her husband is killed, but Mary and her baby daughter Helen are saved thanks to the Morrison shelter¹⁰⁰ they have been sleeping in, and, to the utter astonishment of the firemen, Mary is able to walk out of the flames practically unharmed, pressing her daughter against her chest. Only an indelible boot-shaped scar is left on Mary’s back. Afterwards, Mary falls into a fifteen-year-long coma-like sleep, during which her countenance doesn’t

⁹⁹ Although the raid on Sunday evening, 29th December 1940, was not exceptionally massive, it became notorious for its concentration on the City area, where it destroyed numerous historic buildings, leaving the dome of the only mildly damaged St Paul’s Cathedral standing alone amidst the destruction around it. At that night, photographer Herbert Mason took the iconic picture of the cathedral rising from the smoke. (Ackroyd 2000, 743–744; Inwood 1998, 801–802; Withington 2010, 29–30.)

¹⁰⁰ The Morrison shelter was a movable table-shaped air-raid shelter made of steel and meant for indoor use. In the novel, Mary Gasalee and her daughter sleep in a Morrison shelter in December 1940, although in reality these shelters were actually introduced only in 1941. They were named after Herbert S. Morrison, Secretary of State for Home Affairs and Home Security in 1940–1945. *OED*, s.v. “Morrison, n.” <<http://www.oed.com.libproxy.helsinki.fi/view/Entry/122406>> Last accessed 8 April 2012.

seem to age at all. In her long sleep, she dreams of socializing with 1930s film stars, whom she has learnt about in her job as an usherette in a cinema near her home. When she wakes up in the mid-1950s, she finds herself able to “read minds”, “a common delusion” among the residents of the mental hospital where she is recovering and where she also first becomes acquainted with Josef Kiss and David Mummery (*ML*, 145).

In addition to their mental symptoms – or psychic faculties, depending on the viewpoint – the three protagonists are also united by their mutual friendship, and even love, for both men become Mary’s lovers and, later, after David has died by drowning, she marries Josef. Upon meeting the teenaged David in the hospital for the first time shortly after her awakening, Mary has a “feeling that they must be parts of a single personality joining together for the first time” — a description which despite its obvious romantic connotations also carries a suggestion of the joint role of these three mental patients as a channel for the hidden currents of the City’s collective consciousness (*ML*, 142). The three of them are “like powerful wireless receivers” (*ML*, 30) of other Londoners’ thoughts, memories, and dreams, and this extraordinary capability is also a central element in the way the novel constructs a special *genius Londinii*, based on the city’s shared myths, of which, in the novel’s world, the myth of the Blitz — i.e. the myth of the Londoners’ collective resilience in the face of the traumatizing experiences of war — is the most recent and perhaps also the most influential. The apocalyptic images of the London Blitz function as the novel’s narrative, thematic, and structural focus, from which emanates an omnipresent echo of the city’s collective ordeal and fortitude, thus serving as the basis for the formation of a special spirit of place. This distant but permanent drone of the mythical past is picked up by Josef Kiss, David

Mummery, and Mary Gasalee, three patients tuned to the transmit frequency of the great city. For them, the polyphony of the urban collective consciousness has become an aural reality.

6.2.2. Recalling the trauma of the Blitz

In a chapter set in the recovering but still heavily ruined post-war London of 1946, Josef Kiss makes an excursion to Kew Gardens with his friend Dandy Banaji. Josef's mental balance is already slightly out of kilter at the beginning of their trip, and, when they reach Kew, he suddenly seems to totally lose his mind and climbs a tree in the Palm House. From the crown of the tree, he then begins a rambling speech composed of erotic reminiscences, semi-philosophical reflections on life and London, surprisingly sane analyses of his own mental condition, as well as occasional bits of stream of consciousness — i.e. the “voices” he hears. These “voices” seem to eventually become intermingled with Josef's own thoughts and neither Dandy nor the reader knows if Josef's disjointed utterances originate from his own mind or from the minds of other Londoners, as the nonsensical stream of consciousness starts to infiltrate also into the non-italicized paragraphs. When he refuses to come down, the police are called, and Dandy tries to explain Josef's behaviour to the keeper of the garden: “Please don't be angry with him. [- -] He's a war hero. Shell shock, you know.” (*ML*, 286.)

The term “shell shock” was originally used to refer to the various psycho-physiological symptoms of soldiers who had been exposed to shellfire in the front lines of the First World War, the suicidal ex-soldier Septimus Warren Smith in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) being probably the most famous literary victim of the syndrome. The typical symptoms of shell shock — also referred to as “war neurosis” or “battle hypnosis” by

contemporary medical specialists — included general tremor, amnesia, fatigue, headache, muteness, deafness — or alternatively hyperacusis — nightmares, and often also convulsions as well as loss or disturbance of consciousness (Crocq and Crocq 2000, 49–50; Boehnlein and Hinton 2016, 161). Nowadays, the nervous symptoms of the Great War combatants would be classified as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the diagnostic criteria of which were first published in 1980 in the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III)* of the American Psychiatric Association in the aftermath of the Vietnam War (Caruth 1995, 3; Kerr 2014, 1467).¹⁰¹ Furthermore, since in present-day psychiatry the diagnosis is not only restricted to traumatized soldiers but encompasses responses to any traumatic event from sexual abuse to the effects of natural catastrophes, PTSD would also be the primary diagnosis for the blitzed Londoners of *Mother London*.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Despite the gradual acceptance of the fact that even mentally healthy individuals may collapse mentally under the pressure of combat and that shell shock was, indeed, a real phenomenon, the term was soon considered misleading, as many of the patients suffering from distinct shell shock symptoms had actually not been under direct shell fire at all. Consequently, the term was banned from official medical usage already in 1917. Yet, the term has stuck in the public parlance and thus the characters in *Mother London* also speak of shell shock when referring to the psychological effects of the Blitz. (LERNER, Paul 2003: *Hysterical Men. War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890–1930*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 61.; SHEPHARD, Ben 2001 (2000): *A War of Nerves. Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 31.)

¹⁰² The diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder has also been retrospectively applied to such historical figures as the famous seventeenth-century naval official

However, in the scene at Kew, Dandy's entreaty for the others to have mercy on the shell-shocked "war hero" is, in fact, a deliberate lie, for Josef has just revealed during his monologue that his mental problems actually predate the war. Only when his medical records were destroyed during the Blitz, he decided to take advantage of the situation: "They told me I was loopy. They put it down to the horrors of War. I was lucky my records went up in 1941. It gave me a fresh start and made me a hero instead of a victim." (*ML*, 283–284.) The keeper doesn't believe the diagnosis either: "I've seen shell shock, sir. [- -] And it never took that form. This chap's an exhibitionist." (*Ibid.*) Still, despite the falsity of Josef's diagnosis, with its many references to "shell shock"¹⁰³ the scene provides a key to the central thematics of the novel, i.e. the traumatizing effects of war on both individual victims and the community as a whole.¹⁰⁴ At the same time, the permeating of Josef's own thoughts into the anonymous "voices" of the stream of consciousness reflects the amalgamation of individual and collective memories — or, to use Paul Crosthwaite's (2009, 115–144) formulation, that of "private and public realms", effected by the traumatic and pressurizing experience of war. This fusion of the individual and collective experience then also opens the door for building the bedrock of a collective endurance, as will later be demonstrated in section 6.2.3 below.

and diarist Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), who witnessed both the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London in the 1660s and documented the events and their after-effect in his diary. According to R. J. Daly (1983, *passim*), in his diary entries during the fire in September 1666 and in the entries of the following months, Pepys shows clear signs of post-traumatic stress, including irritability, anxiety, insomnia, nightmares, and impairment of memory. (DALY, R. J. 1983: Samuel Pepys and post-traumatic stress disorder. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*. 143. 64–68.)

¹⁰³ One of the firemen who come to help Josef down from the palm tree also tells of his own "spell" of shell shock during the Blitz (*ML*, 293).

¹⁰⁴ On *Mother London* and the thematics of trauma, see also Ganteau (2011, *passim*) and Houswitschka (2015, *passim*).

As such, the “symptoms” or aural hallucinations of the novel’s three major characters seem to resemble the definition of post-traumatic stress disorder as “a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event” (Caruth 1995, 4). In addition, the effects of trauma may also include “numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (or avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event” (ibid.) — a condition which bears a resemblance to Mary Gasalee’s comatose sleep following her dramatic rescue from the bombing. In the novel, the pathological nature of the aural and other hallucinations¹⁰⁵ of the main troika is also hinted at by the fact that their symptoms are alleviated by medication. Without medication, the hallucinations may become nearly uncontrollable. Still, Mary occasionally also knows a “sense of regret at her potential loss” when she thinks about the renewal of her prescription, for not all of her hallucinations are unbearable or dispiriting (*ML*, 29). “Hearing” the thoughts of young children, for instance, is comforting to her, as it reminds her of her own happy childhood days.

Among the experiences of the three protagonists, Mary’s case in particular seems to be a textbook example of a severe post-traumatic reaction. Moreover, as her symptoms — contrary to those of Josef Kiss — appear to be the result of an actual missile attack, the already outdated diagnosis of “shell shock” would, in fact, be more than apposite in her case. Although she is able to walk away from the smoking ruins of her home apparently

¹⁰⁵ As Paul Crosthwaite (2009, 133) notes, “the ontological status of the characters’ condition is continually in doubt”. Moorcock himself has pointed to the absence of any “unequivocally supernatural scene” in the novel, yet, as Crosthwaite (ibid.) comments, the supernatural interpretation is not completely ruled out, either. (GREENLAND, Colin 1992: *Michael Moorcock: Death Is No Obstacle*. Manchester: Savoy. 105. Quoted in Crosthwaite 2009. 133.)

unharméd, she suffers from acute amnesia and soon falls into a deep and long coma. Even after she wakes up, her memories of the Blitz remain few and vague:

Just before she went into her coma Mary was in shock, unable to remember her own name or the baby's. In hospital they decided she had a form of amnesia familiar amongst the War's casualties, akin to senility, but they could make no more tests until she woke up from her long sleep. Now she had clear memories of her girlhood, of her dreams, and few of the Blitz. She was still not entirely certain what had happened when the bomb hit and could not quite recall what [her husband] had looked like [- -]. (ML, 31.)

Yet, decades later, Mary's memories of the missile attack do return, a meeting with the fireman who helped Mary and her baby out of the ruins acting as a catalyst: "I watched the black staircase falling away all around me. I held tight to Helen feeling the sting of the fire on my own skin. [- -] I lost my footing and fell forward. Fifteen years later I woke up." (ML, 433.) In other words, her traumatic remembrance mutates from amnesia to detailed mnemonic imagery.

As for David Mummery, the war has been a dominant influence in his childhood. His first memory is of the searchlights of the London air defence waving against the sky while British and German aircrafts "wheeled and dived almost languorously in the penultimate manoeuvres of an air-battle"¹⁰⁶ (ML, 21). Despite his own traumatizing encounter with the German missiles, he spends a generally happy childhood, and, like the Hanway

¹⁰⁶ Paul Crosthwaite (2009, 128–129) presumes this to refer to the "Battle of Britain" of the summer and autumn of 1940. Yet, as Crosthwaite (ibid.) remarks, too, in reality, a six-month-old child would certainly have been too young to "meaningfully register" those events. In a later chapter of the novel, David's first memory is described in a way that indicates its belonging to a later phase of the actual Blitz (ML, 155).

brothers in Peter Ackroyd's *Three Brothers*, David takes advantage of the opportunities for adventuring offered by the ruins of the blitzed city: "By day with friends I hunted for shrapnel and the wreckage of combat planes; we explored ruined houses and burned-out factories, leapt between blackened joists and swaying walls above chasms three or four storeys high" (ibid.). In 1945, "a lucky V2 rocket" even destroys David's school, "freeing" him to continue his adventures among the ruins (*ML*, 23).¹⁰⁷

Still, David's near encounter with the German V2 missile remains the determining factor of his life, and, unlike Mary, he does not suffer from amnesia of the event but remembers everything in detail. Later he is able to describe his experience accurately and as if in slow motion:

Lying on my back in what had been someone's garden I watched the rubble falling around me, striking the ground and sending up clods of earth, dust and more debris while walls kept collapsing. I could not move. I was in a sort of shallow grave, my face pressed against clumps of pale foxgloves, pink and golden. I can smell them now, as I write. I watched the massive tidal waves of white and grey smoke smothering us all as we lay on a beach at the edge of the world and then felt the planet being blown apart around me until I was on the only surviving fragment, drifting in space. (*ML*, 411.)

Little David is rescued from the rubble — and from the vicinity of a couple of unexploded incendiaries — by an African sailor on the leave who in David's imagination soon becomes a mysterious hero figure, the "Black Captain". Even as an adult, David remains convinced that the Black Captain actually flew over the city to his rescue. Later, in the mid-1960s, David meets the sailor, Mombazhi Faysha, again by chance and befriends him and his white wife, Alice. Finally, during the racial riot at the Notting Hill Carnival

¹⁰⁷ In fact, David's childhood experiences mirror closely Moorcock's own childhood in the 1940s London (Crosthwaite 2009, 128).

in 1977, more than thirty years after his own rescue, he is able to repay the Black Captain by saving him from the hands of policemen who suspect the Captain of attacking a white woman, when in reality Mombazhi is trying to lead his own wife to safety from the Carnival.

According to current notions in the field of trauma research, the distinctive nature of traumatic memories may result from their deviant encoding in the brain, caused either by changes in attentional focusing or by disturbances in the normal functioning of the hippocampus, brought about by intense emotions (van der Kolk and Fisler 1995, 508; see also van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995, 172). Here present-day research treads in the footsteps of Pierre Janet, the French neurologist and psychologist, who perceived the distinctiveness of traumatic memories already around the turn of the twentieth century. Janet claimed that extreme emotions may prevent a frightening experience from transforming into “ordinary” or “narrative memory” and, as a consequence, the experience will remain in the mind as a “fixed idea” which “for convenience” is called “traumatic memory” (Janet 1925, 663).¹⁰⁸ These memories may then be either subconsciously repressed or dissociated by forgetting, or, they can return as physical symptoms, nightmares, or flashbacks (e.g. Young 1995, 34; Kenny 1996, 160). To recover from the trauma, the victim then has to find a way

¹⁰⁸ Today, Janet’s “narrative memory” would instead be called “declarative” or “explicit” memory, whereas traumatic memory can be seen as a subdivision of “non-declarative” or “implicit” memory (van der Kolk and Fisler 1995, 507–508; see also section 3.2.3 above).

to restore the repressed or dissociated memories and rework them into the narrative of an ordinary memory (e.g. Kacandes 2001, 91).

Mary's dissociative¹⁰⁹ amnesia — i.e. her loss of memory concerning the bombing of her home as well as the earlier events of the Blitz — is thus a typical symptom of traumatized patients (Friedman 2011, 14; Good and Hinton 2016, 20). However, the other extreme — remembering the incident in detail and with extreme clarity — is also possible.¹¹⁰ To quote Bessel van der Kolk and Rita Fisler (1995, 508), “some aspects of traumatic events appear to get fixed in the mind, unaltered by the passage of time or by the intervention of subsequent experience”. Thus, David Mummery's detailed memory of the missile attack could also be classified as an example of traumatic memory. Furthermore, also the constancy of his memory fits the description of traumatic memories. David's recollection of the bombing remains stable for the rest of his life and he is able to return to the minutiae of his experience even several decades later when the memory is triggered again by the riot at the Notting Hill Carnival. He even remembers word for word an odd foreign sentence he heard during the event although he doesn't understand its meaning until much later when Mombazhi translates it for him.

Of course, the protagonists of *Mother London* would not have been totally alone in their affliction during the war, although the adverse impact of the air raids on Londoners' mental health remained milder than predicted (Jones, Woolven, Durodie, and Wessely 2004, 474; see also section

¹⁰⁹ Dissociation as a psychological term refers to the disintegration of consciousness and personality, in its pathological form particularly as a consequence of a traumatic or stressful experience. It may be manifested through various symptoms — such as amnesia, depersonalization, and fragmentation of identity. Dissociative symptoms also constitute a pronounced portion of the symptoms of PTSD. (GOLD, Steven N. 2012: Dissociation. *Encyclopedia of Trauma. An Interdisciplinary Guide*. Edited by Charles R. Figley. Los Angeles: Sage. 213–214.)

¹¹⁰ Sometimes even a combination of both extremes — i.e. amnesia and vivid recollection — can occur in the same patient (van der Kolk and Fisler 1995, 508).

6.2.3 below). In the 1930s, in anticipation of the war, authorities had estimated the number of civilian casualties and the amount of psychological distress to be relatively high if a war were to break out and the citizens were exposed to extensive air raids. The Committee of Imperial Defence had calculated that as a result of a two-month air raid offensive 600 000 Londoners would be killed and another 1.2 million injured. In addition, it was feared that a general panic, as well as spontaneous mass evacuation, would occur, resulting in a sharp drop in production and, at worst, in the defeat of Britain. These fears, however, proved exaggerated, as civilian morale, for the most part, remained high in British towns, despite heavy raids. (Ackroyd 2000, 738–739; Inwood 1998, 790–791; Jones et al. 2004, *passim*; Wessely 2006, *passim*.)¹¹¹

Still, even though long-term psychological disturbances were surprisingly rare — and were mainly observed in patients with a previous history of mental illness — witnessing the destruction of familiar neighbourhoods and hearing about the casualties did not leave the inhabitants totally emotionless. As one Londoner described the atmosphere during the V2 raids in July 1944 in her diary: “One listens fascinated to the Doodle Bugs passing over, holding one’s breath, praying they will travel on, but feeling a wretched cad, because you know that means they will explode on someone else.” (Hodgson 2009, 418.) In *Mother London*, too, the Blitz has a sensitizing effect on the characters, even if they are not downright traumatized by the event. Thus, even the pseudo-shell-shocked Josef Kiss is shaken by the bombings, and his wartime memories, though not pathologically traumatic, are still overpowering and in part also physical, bodily memories:

¹¹¹ A telling example of the miscalculations made by the authorities concerning the expected psychological impact of the bombing was the closure of a London clinic for traumatized air raid victims in 1941 — due to a lack of patients (Jones et al. 2004, 474).

6. The spirit of the suffering city

Those steady missiles. It was all that stuff on the other side of the Viaduct that horrified me in the end. I'd visited Mrs Mackleworth down there only a day or two earlier. Oh, the miserable smell of her rooms. Of her and her foul little dog! How beautiful she was! It's a sin. It makes you feel sick. I wondered if somehow I had willed the incendiary onto her. Did many people feel that sort of guilt during the War? A fanciful enough notion, an egocentric notion, since Hitler and his planes were after all the active agents. The Temple, Dandy! Don't you mourn it? I saw red. Really red. Bright like a light in my eyes. They were just kids doing the killing. Our kids and theirs. That awful calm face in the rubble. The poor GI who never wanted to be here in the first place. Just bone and gristle and blood all on one side. Is there much point to carrying on? (*ML*, 282.)

Yet both real-life Londoners and the characters of *Mother London* carried on, and in this attitude of war-time resilience lies also the core theme of the novel and a key to the formation of a special spirit of the city, based on a long continuum of stories and memories of endurance. As Jean-Michel Ganteau (2011, 109) notes, an important common characteristic of the main troika is that they are all "survivors" — "a notion that extends to most of the city dwellers" in the novel's wartime London.

6.2.3. The Apocalypse and the memory and myth of endurance¹¹²

The main motto of *Mother London* is a wartime poem by the British author and artist Mervyn Peake (1911–1968). In the poem, entitled "London,

¹¹² When I was working on this chapter in the spring of 2017, the terror attacks in London, St. Petersburg, Stockholm, and Manchester showed that the theme of collective resilience is as topical today as it was in the blitzed London of the 1940s. In connection with the recent terror attacks, the concept of collective resilience was also frequently referred to by officials and heads of state who commented on the atrocities in the media.

1941”, the bombed city is transformed into a mangled humanoid creature who, despite her serious injuries, “towers erect, the great stones at her throat”, “[a]cross a world of sudden fear and firelight”. Moreover, she is not just any injured female persona but a mother, with a child of “black ivy” clinging to her breasts of “crumbling brick” — thus, together with the title of the novel itself, attesting to the validity of Sara Wasson’s (2010, 144) remark that “[m]aternal personification is a staple of London writing [- -] and much wartime writing uses the convention”:

Half masonry, half pain; her head
From which the plaster breaks away
Like flesh from the rough bone, is turned
Upon a neck of stones; her eyes
Are lid-less windows of smashed glass
[- -]
Her breasts are crumbling brick where the black ivy
Had clung like a fantastic child for succour
And now hangs draggled with long peels of paper,
Fire-crisp, fire-faded awnings of limp paper
Repeating still their ghosted leaf and lily.
[- -]

Printed on the first pages of the novel, Peake’s poem primes the canvas of *Mother London* with an apocalyptic tone and, at the same time, points to the central message of Moorcock’s novel: the emergence of a special empowering myth out of a collective ordeal and a collective fortitude. The mythicization of the war and its impact on the city and the citizens is also hinted at in some of the other mottos which precede each of the novel’s six parts. For instance, an excerpt from H. V. Morton’s *London* (1941) — set as the motto for the novel’s first part, “Entrance to the city” — refers to Londoners’ “technique of living in the face of repeated danger”, accepting the

“preposterous” and the “incredible” as the “normal background of existence” (*ML*, 3). Similarly, in the longish motto preceding the fifth part of *Mother London* and excerpted from Arthur Mee’s *London, Heart of the Empire, Wonder of the World* (1948), a “book of a city which will not be destroyed”, the courage and the endurance of the city are praised in an enthusiastic mood, for, according to Mee, during the Blitz “[t]he capital unfurled the banner of courage and became the emblem of the nation’s endurance” (*ML*, 375). Although the novel’s second sub-motto, a passage from R. P. Downes’s work *Cities Which Fascinate* (1914), antedates the afflictions of the Blitz, its celebratory tone connects it with the chronologically later quotations paying tribute to the Londoners who stood up to the threat of the Germans: “LONDON! There is a resonant sound and roll in the very name of the world’s greatest city. It affects us like the boom and reverberation of thunder.” (*ML*, 55.)

In the mottos of *Mother London*, the myth of the Blitz is also paralleled with earlier myths and legends from the city’s history, especially with the seventeenth-century calamities of the Great Plague and the Great Fire. For instance, in a quote from James Pope-Hennessy’s commentary in *History Under Fire* (1941) — a book of Cecil Beaton’s photographs showing war-damaged London — the Great Plague is proposed as the most vicious experience of the three, outdoing both the Great Fire and the Blitz. Still, according to Pope-Hennessy, the “insecurity to daily life” caused by the air raids resembled the insecurity experienced by the Londoners under the threat of the plague in 1665 (*ML*, 241).

Thus, with their overarching theme, the mottos of the novel function as a repetitive refrain, echoing the central message of the novel: the endurance of the city and its citizens. The myth of the endurance and the courage of Londoners during the war also ripples under the surface of the actual narrative, occasionally coming to light in the dialogue or thoughts of the

main characters, in the italicized stream of consciousness of the “heard voices”, or in the protagonists’ visionary dreams of “a city more powerful than all the cities before it, perhaps more powerful than all cities will ever be” (*ML*, 221).

The mythical quality of the city’s endurance, eulogized in the mottos, is enhanced by the equally mythical dimensions of the wartime horrors. In *Mother London*, the Blitz is told as a second Apocalypse, provoking terror in the citizens. A direct reference to the Book of Revelation appears in the middle of the novel, when Josef Kiss is hurrying to defuse the unexploded bomb and sees from afar the German bombers attacking the eastern parts of the city:

The city was actually shrieking. He had never imagined a single air-raid could be so fierce [- -]. His impulse to head towards the danger had subsided, not only because it was impossible to believe any creature could have survived but also because massive images had begun to form in the vast fire: crazed horsemen rode foaming horses over cliffs of smoke; naked giants writhed in the valleys, their eyes glaring with pain and fear; from the darkness of caves hideously distorted figures shambled as if in pursuit, and all the beasts of the apocalypse leered, gibbered and slavered as they took shape from the chaos giving them birth; while the black crimson-eyed angels of the Pit, their swords burning with mercury and molten brass, rose in mocking challenge to survey the dying city. [- -] Then all at once a wave of anguished voices hit him and he gasped as if winded [- -] (*ML*, 245–246.)

The intensity of the scene and its pivotal position in the middle of the novel — and also in the novel’s temporal nucleus — makes it one of *Mother London*’s key scenes. There, in the capacity of a “wireless receiver” of his fellow citizens’ thoughts and states of mind, Josef Kiss functions as a channel for the collective anguish of the city:

The voices came again, fiercer and more urgent than before, striking him with such force that he almost fell. Each voice was an individual, each one in such terrible confusion, such ghastly physical pain, such physic agony, that he found he too was shouting with them; his voice joining the millions to form a single monumental howl. The noise was like a bomb-blast, hot and ravening, threatening to tear the clothes off his body. [- -] He was attacked by all the demons of Hell, by every tormented soul pleading for release. (ML, 246.)

Thus, in the chorus of the agonized voices of Josef's fellow Londoners, the individual traumas of the war coalesce into one vast collective trauma, the "monumental howl" of a devastating communal experience. For trauma is also a social phenomenon and "the tissues of community can be damaged in much the same way as the tissues of mind and body" (Erikson 1995, 185).¹¹³ As a result, a collective trauma can also become a "source of communality", joining people together in a way reminiscent of the connective effect of a common language or a common background (ibid., 186). Here lies also the paradox of a traumatizing situation, for, at the same time as it

¹¹³ It has also been argued that, like an individual trauma, where the traumatic experience may impede the functioning of the hippocampus, thus hindering the process of memory consolidation and inducing amnesia, a collective trauma affects a "social hippocampus", consisting of society's relation-makers, "including opinion leaders in journalism, academics, politics, etc." Seen via this analogy, the removal or damage of the "social hippocampus" — in connection with a collective trauma — then results in "collective retrograde amnesia". (ANASTASIO, Thomas J., Kristen Ann Ehrenberger, Patrick Watson, and Wenyi Zhang 2012: *Individual and Collective Memory Consolidation: Analogous Processes On Different Levels*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. Pages 105, 181, passim.)

may make individual victims feel as if they had been somehow disconnected from the rest of the humanity due to their extreme experience, a shared trauma also draws people together, irrespective of their possibly very different personal backgrounds. In that way, trauma has “both centripetal and centrifugal tendencies”. (Ibid.)

The centrifugal tendencies of a shared trauma show in Moorcock’s novel as they showed also in the real-life blitzed London of 1940s. The experience of war binds people together, friends and relatives as well as strangers. As David Mummery writes about his relationship to his mother: “My mother and I were close. We had survived the War together.” (*ML*, 156.) In that sense, *Mother London* reflects the “Blitz spirit”¹¹⁴ of wartime London and the attitude that “London can take it!”, as a popular refrain and the name of a propagandist film commissioned in 1940 by the Ministry of Information (MOI) claimed (Calder 2001, 231). The reports of the Home Intelligence division of MOI and Mass-Observation — an opinion-measuring organisation founded in 1937 — indicated that Londoners, indeed, for the most part, could take it in their stride, with a relatively calm attitude (Ackroyd 2000, 738; Inwood 1998, 790; Jones et al. 2004, *passim*). Although the same pragmatic approach to the threat of the Luftwaffe could also be observed elsewhere in Britain, “if London can take it, so can we” being a common reaction, the aptitude to resilience was also dependent on the size of the city, larger cities like London being more resilient than smaller ones (Calder 2001, 127; see also Jones et al. 2004, 472). Conditioning also played a part, and thus those cities and towns which had been “prepared” for the air raids by earlier and possibly lighter attacks — as London had during the Battle of Britain in the summer of 1940 — were

¹¹⁴ The phrase “Blitz spirit” — or “the spirit of the Blitz” — refers to the “[s]toicism and determination in a difficult or dangerous situation, especially as displayed by a group of people” (*Oxford Living Dictionaries*. S.v. “Blitz spirit”. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/blitz_spirit> Last accessed 15 April 2017.)

less likely to witness a collapse of general courage under a heavy bombing (Jones et al. 2004, 470). In other words: even though the myth of the Blitz spirit has also been contested, for instance by Angus Calder in his critical examination of the general atmosphere during the first phase of the air raids, *The Myth of the Blitz* (1991), there is still truth enough in it to challenge the use of the word “myth” in the sense of an imaginary or fantastic story (see also Groes 2011, 50–51; Inwood 1998, 790; Jones et al. 2004, passim; Symons 1991, 9).¹¹⁵ Here, perhaps, the use of the word approaches Roland Barthes’s (1990, 129) view of myth as “neither a lie nor a confession” but an “inflexion”.

In *Mother London*, the myth is also needed for a special purpose, for, as several writers have recently noted, in the novel the myth of the Blitz is set against the “Thatcherite dismantling of the Welfare State”, well under way at the time of the novel’s writing and publication in the 1980s (Scroggings 2016, 113; see also Crosthwaite 2009, 143–144, and Groes 2011, passim). In the novel, there is also a direct link between the protagonists and Mrs Thatcher, via Josef Kiss’s harsh and opportunistic sister Beryl Male, who becomes the Minister of Arts and “the only woman in the government whom Mrs Thatcher even slightly likes” (*ML*, 341). Later, Beryl becomes the Minister of Health and, according to Josef, plans to close all the outpatient clinics: “Downing Street’s certainly earned its name” (*ML*, 464). Against the background of the novel’s present in the mid-1980s, the “mythical” history of the Blitz thus appears as a golden time, when, under the

¹¹⁵ Angus Calder does not totally demolish the Myth of the Blitz, either, yet he notes that the “construction [of the myth] involved putting together facts known or believed to be true, overlaying these with inspirational values and convincing rhetoric — and leaving out everything known or believed to be factual which didn’t fit” — such as “killing of civilians and domestic destruction initiated by the British themselves” (Calder 2001, 43). Here Calder refers to the destructive assaults by the Royal Air Force on Dresden and other German cities as well as to the huge number of casualties among the British aircrew (*ibid.*, 42).

German threat, class boundaries were breaking down and people felt solidarity and camaraderie towards each other irrespective of their backgrounds. As the old fireman Jocko Baines remarks to Mary and her daughter: "The Blitz was like a mother to me. I never had so much attention. I'm not saying she was kind, though she brought out a lot of kindness in people." (*ML*, 434.)

Paul Crosthwaite (2009, 144) has discerned a reflection of this communal spirit of the Blitz in the many stream-of-consciousness paragraphs of the novel in which the private and public realms permeate each other and the reader cannot be sure whose thoughts and memories are being recorded. In this respect, Crosthwaite sees *Mother London* as a kindred work to Virginia Woolf's wartime novel, *Between the Acts* (1941), where "an erosion of subjective boundaries under the threat of war" is manifested by an "anti-mimetic use of indirect interior monologue" which reflects the interchanging and amalgamating thoughts of some of the characters in Woolf's novel (*ibid.*, 126–127). In *Mother London* too a similar "erosion of boundaries" becomes noticeable in the stream-of-consciousness paragraphs, where individual thoughts and memories coalesce to transform into the collective consciousness of the city. As a consequence, a collective "sociobiographical memory" is formed, to borrow a term used by Eviatar Zerubavel (1999, 91).¹¹⁶ According to Zerubavel (*ibid.*), this sociobiographical memory "accounts for the sense of pride, pain, or shame we sometimes experience as a result of things that happened to groups and communities to which we belong long before we even joined them". In that sense, sociobiographical memory is synonymous with Jan Assmann's "cultural memory" which is "based on fixed points in the past" (Assmann 2008, 113; see also

¹¹⁶ Zerubavel borrows the term from Lisa Bonchek's "Fences and Bridges: The Use of Material Objects in the Social Construction of Continuity and Discontinuity of Time and Identity" (unpublished manuscript, Rutgers University, Department of Sociology, 1994). (Zerubavel 1999, p. 142, n. 29.)

section 3.2.4 above). Thus, in Assmann's (ibid.) view, cultural memory does not preserve the past "as such" but "in symbols as they are represented in oral myths or in writings, performed in feasts, and as they are continually illuminating a changing present". As a result, "[i]n the context of cultural memory, the distinction between myth and history vanishes" (ibid.). Therefore, cultural memory is not dependent on the truth of the past as it actually happened but only on the "past as it is remembered". From this viewpoint, the myth of the Blitz becomes part of the city's cultural memory, despite its still being on the much shorter time horizon of "communicative memory" — the other half of collective memory as defined by Assmann.¹¹⁷ As David Mummery writes in the first paragraph of the novel, "[a]ll great cities possess their special myths", and "amongst London's in recent years is the story of the Blitz, of [the Londoners'] endurance" (*ML*, 5). However, in *Mother London*, the myth of the Blitz becomes integrated with the legendary past of the city, recorded by David in his writings and beginning with such "heroes and demigods" as Brutus and Boadicea (*ML*, 480). In the novel's London, "so full of ghosts", the "spirit citizenry" of the city's past heroes and "less exalted creatures" equals the army of its living citizens, and this multitude of its ghosts can then be met in the voices heard by David and his companions (ibid.).

In the final pages of the novel, the spotlight moves onto Old Nonny, an elderly woman — "as old as the hills and older than the Tower of London" (*ML*, 349) — and an outpatient of the same clinic with Josef, Mary, and David. Though only a minor character, in her random appearances throughout the novel she comes across as a personification of the *genius* of the city. Like a nomad, she wanders along "the city's old paths [- -] obliterated by

¹¹⁷ Assmann (2008, 117) sees the time structure of communicative memory as consisting of three to four "interacting generations", compared to the "mythical, primordial time" of cultural memory.

fire and bombs, crossed by new roads, broken by tunnels or viaducts, yet as familiar to her as secret marsh trails existing here before London was built" (*ML*, 495). Her accent is extraordinary as well, for it is like "ancient London English on which are layered a thousand other influences and aspirations" (*ML*, 13). Her vast repository of old tales and stories of London's past heroes and rebels resembles a fountain of the city's endurance throughout the ages:

Brilliant and exotic as a fabulous bird she migrates from pub to pub as Josef Kiss once did, paying with her stories for her suppers and her drinks. She knows something about every district, every street, almost every house in London and can tell the old tales of Brutus, Boadicea and Dick Turpin with the same vivid relish as she recounts the newer legends of the Blitz. She knows which ghosts haunt cellars beneath modern concrete and glass, whose skeletons are buried where. She tells of uncanny presentiments, impossible escapes and unexpected bravery; she speaks of David Mummery, rescued by the Black Captain; of Josef Kiss who reads minds and by this means saved a thousand lives, and of Mary Gasalee walking unscathed from the inferno with her baby in her arms. Such stories are common amongst all ordinary Londoners though few are ever noted by the Press. By means of our myths and legends we maintain a sense of what we are worth and who we are. Without them we should undoubtedly go mad. (*ML*, 495–496.)

The significance of these stories seems to be their message to present-day Londoners of their worth and their history of resilience and communal spirit. Thus, in their emphasis on the role of the collective myths and legends as essential building blocks of the enduring spirit of the city, the last pages of *Mother London* move the novel thematically closer to Maureen Duffy's *Capital* and Peter Ackroyd's *The House of Doctor Dee*, discussed earlier in chapter 4. For Moorcock's characters, the myth of the Blitz becomes

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an equal part of their heritage with the earlier histories, myths, and legends. The Blitz may indeed have supported “a myth of British or English moral pre-eminence, buttressed by British unity”, as Angus Calder (2001, 2) suggests, yet in Moorcock’s novel, it reinforces most of all the continuing endurance of Londoners and the endurance of the spirit of a city whose boundaries in effect exceed those of England or Britain. As Old Nonny — as if in anticipation of the thematics of chapter 7 in this study — explains to Mary: “There’s a bit of every continent in the world in the average Londoner. That’s why this city’s a combination of all other cities, too.” (*ML*, 400.)

6.3. A city searches for a murderer in Peter Ackroyd's *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*

6.3.1. Golem of the East End

Our ancestors thought of the golem as an homunculus, a material being created by magic, a piece of red clay brought to life in the sorcerer's laboratory. It is a fearful thing and, according to the ancient legend, it sustains its life by ingesting the spirit or soul of a human being. (*DL*, 68.)

The kinship between Peter Ackroyd's seventh and eighth novels — *The House of Doctor Dee* (1993) and *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (1994)¹¹⁸ — is obvious to anyone reading them side by side or one after the other, as is the kinship of these two to a few of Ackroyd's other novels, especially *Hawksmoor* (1985). *The House of Doctor Dee* follows in many respects the trail begun in *Hawksmoor*, whereas *Dan Leno* proceeds with the themes and motifs presented in *The House of Doctor Dee*. *Dan Leno* is also set in the neighbourhood to where the last visionary pages of *The House of Doctor Dee* conducted its two protagonist-narrators, i.e. in the East End of London. (See also Onega 1999, 112–114, 133; Lewis 2007, 74.) Furthermore, the atmosphere in all three novels is markedly Gothic — a characteristic which Ackroyd has proclaimed to be “of all types of fiction, the most thoroughly English in inspiration and execution” as it “hovers on that ambiguous edge between comedy and tragedy where as we have seen, the

¹¹⁸ In the United States, the novel was published in 1995 under a different title, as *The Trial of Elizabeth Cree: A Novel of the Limehouse Murders*. Barry Lewis (2007, 80–81) assumes the reason for this to lie both in the unfamiliarity of the name of Dan Leno to American readers and in the need to emphasize the genre of the novel.

English genius seems happiest to reside” (Ackroyd 2002b, 338; see also Chalupský 2016, *passim*). In Ackroyd’s view, the same characteristic — in the form of “horror” — is also an essential element in any London art of the so-called “Cockney visionaries” (Ackroyd 2002c, 342; see also section 4.3.3 above). Yet, in addition to its Gothic characteristics, *Dan Leno*, like *Hawksmoor*, is also a detective novel — a genre which for Ackroyd (2002b, 338) is a “modern incarnation” of the Gothic novel (see also Chalupský 2016, 68).

However, especially from the perspective of the present study, there is still one important common denominator between *Dan Leno* and its immediate predecessor, *The House of Doctor Dee*, namely their use of a mythical, artificial creature as an embodiment of the spirit of the city — albeit a different kind of spirit in each novel. As already noted in chapters 4.3. and 4.4. above, in *The House of Doctor Dee* the regularly reincarnating homunculus can be interpreted as the representation of the *genius* of both the eponymous house of the novel and the whole city, in its ability to constantly regenerate symbolizing urban continuity — which in its turn leads to a kind of “urban anamnesis” (Wolfreys 2004, 127). By contrast, as will be demonstrated in the present chapter, in *Dan Leno*, the figure of the golem can be read as a personification of the darker, Gothic, aspects of the city, which in the novel’s London — as well as in the real-life nineteenth-century London — are centred in the eastern parts of the city.

In the following pages, I shall first take a brief look at the plot and the narrative constituents of *Dan Leno* and *the Limehouse Golem*, before continuing in sections 6.3.3, 6.3.4, and 6.3.5 to present a closer analysis of the ways in which the novel, in a postmodernist reuse of the nineteenth-century tradition of the urban Gothic and with a skilful resurrection of Victorian London, moulds the earthen figure of the golem as an image of the

shadowy side of *genius Londinii*, representing the Dionysiac element of the city.

6.3.2. Lost in the folds of narration

In principle, *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* is a murder mystery, set mainly in the East End of 1880s London. Horribly mutilated bodies abound, Londoners seem to be both terror-stricken and taken over by a “frenzied interest” (*DL*, 88), and Chief Inspector Kildare and Detective Paul Bryden do their best to hunt down the mysterious serial killer, who in the minds of the citizens has already become a terrifying and mythical creature, the eponymous “Limehouse Golem”, leaving bloodstained clues to its name at the murder scenes. Parallel to the murder mystery runs the story of Elizabeth Cree, who rises from her humble beginnings as “Little Lizzie” — a poor seamstress living with her religious and cruel mother — first to work with the famous comedian Dan Leno and to perform in the music halls as “Lambeth Marsh Lizzie”, and then to become the wife of the wealthy John Cree. Elizabeth’s story, too, is decked with dead bodies, for those who happen to get in her way, including her mother and her husband, often conveniently die soon after. In the end — or actually in the beginning, for the hanging of an anonymous woman is told right on the first page — Elizabeth is finally hanged for the murder of her husband. In her last conversation with a priest, just before her execution, Elizabeth then confesses to being guilty of all the other suspicious deaths and murders, including those committed by the mysterious Limehouse Golem. As she remarks to the priest: “*I am the London phantom*” (*DL*, 272; italics in the original).

Yet, despite all the classic elements of a standard detective novel¹¹⁹, the narrative proceeds neither rectilinearly nor chronologically but instead as a fragmented, multilayered, and polyphonic fabric, compared by Barry Lewis (2007, 81) to an “intricately [folded] piece of Japanese origami” — a characteristic which has also been read as a reflection of the true nature of the city itself, for, as Jeremy Gibson and Julian Wolfreys (2000, 200) phrase it: “Put simply, the novel figures the city as being composed and asserting its identities as a resonant configuration of textual grafts, trace upon trace, fold upon fold.” The novel’s fifty-one short chapters are comprised of first-person narration by Elizabeth Cree, omniscient narration, court transcripts, newspaper excerpts, and incriminating entries from a diary purportedly written by John Cree, in which he reveals himself to be responsible for the atrocities conducted by the Limehouse Golem. The diary, however, has been forged by the real culprit, Elizabeth, as she tells the priest in her final appearance in the novel:

Do you remember how Harlequin always blames Pantaloon? Well, I made up a diary and laid the guilt upon him. I had finished a play for him once, you see, so I knew all the lingo. I kept a diary in his name, which will one day damn him before the world. [- -] When his diary is found, I will be exonerated even for his death. The world will believe I destroyed a monster. (DL, 273.)

Thus, Elizabeth is here presented as a literary pasticheur, a role in concord with her career as a cross-dressing music-hall impersonator as well as reflective of the imitative talents of Ackroyd himself.¹²⁰ In the last chapter, the narrative and fictive layers of the novel are then duplicated once more

¹¹⁹ On *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* as a crime narrative, see Chalupský 2016, 132–139.

¹²⁰ See section 4.3.2, footnote 61 above.

in a mise en abyme-like scene where a theatre company is performing the play, *Misery Junction*, which Elizabeth once finished for her husband. The directress of the theatre, Gertrude Latimer, has heard of Elizabeth's death sentence and decides to "enliven the plot with some topical references" (DL, 276). Thus, the name of the protagonist — a near-authentic portrait of Elizabeth already in the original — is changed from Catherine Dove to Elizabeth Cree and the ending of the play is altered to better echo the fate of the "real" Elizabeth. Consequently, in the play, too, the character of Elizabeth poisons her husband and is condemned to death. The the new version of the play premières on the evening following Elizabeth's execution and the role of Elizabeth is played by Aveline Mortimer, Elizabeth's one-time colleague on the music-hall stage and later her maid — and, due to Elizabeth's scheming, also her husband's mistress. The play opens — like the novel it is embedded in — with the scene of the hanging, which, to the shock of the audience, is "mounted so impressively and so realistically" (DL, 281), as Aveline-Elizabeth falls with a rope around her neck through a trapdoor on the stage. Thanks to a swift backstage recasting of the roles, the show can go on and the audience leaves the theatre unaware that, because of a strange failure in the stage mechanics, Aveline has been hanged in reality too.

In the general style of Ackroyd's other novels, too, many of the events and characters of *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* have their historical counterparts. For instance, the brutal murders of two prostitutes evoke a series of similar murders by the mysterious serial killer Jack the Ripper in London's Whitechapel area in 1888, whereas the slaughter of the Gerrard family in their house on the Ratcliffe Highway echoes the separate real-life murders of two families on the same street in December 1811. In the novel,

the murders of 1811 are also referred to in a fictive¹²¹ essay “Romanticism and Crime” written by the nineteenth-century novelist George Gissing, in which he discusses a *real* essay on the Ratcliffe Highway murders, i.e. “On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts” by the essayist Thomas De Quincey — an arrangement that is yet another example of the metafictional and multilayered intertextuality of Ackroyd’s writing.¹²² The murder of John Cree and the ensuing trial of his widow also have their real-life models in the murder of James Maybrick, a wealthy Liverpool cotton merchant, whose young American wife Florie was charged with poisoning James with arsenic and condemned to death in 1889¹²³ (Lewis 2007, 83).

In addition to the young George Gissing, already mentioned above, there are also two other real-life characters roaming around in the folds of the many-layered narrative labyrinth of Ackroyd’s novel, namely the London-based German sociologist and philosopher Karl Marx as well as the

¹²¹ See Gibson and Wolfreys 2000, page 286, note 25.

¹²² In Ackroyd’s novel the year of the Ratcliffe Highway murders is given as 1812, yet, in reality, they had already taken place in December 1811. The lapse with the year is repeated in Ackroyd’s history of London, *London: The Biography*. (Ackroyd 2000, 678; Inwood 1998, 590; Palmer 2000, 53–54; *The London Encyclopædia* 1987 (1983). Edited by Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert. London: Papermac. 657.) The reason for the erroneous year may lie in De Quincey’s tripartite essay, the second paper of which also mentions the year 1812. (DE QUINCEY, Thomas 1839: Second Paper On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts. <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/de_quincey/thomas/murder-considered-as-one-of-the-fine-arts/index.html> Last accessed 7 May 2017.)

¹²³ Florie Maybrick’s death sentence was reduced to a long imprisonment only after a petition signed by three American presidents was sent to the Queen. As for James Maybrick, he was later connected to the Ripper murders by a fake diary, which was “found” in 1992 and appeared to prove his guilt for the killings. (Lewis 2007, 83–84.)

eponymous nineteenth-century music-hall comedian and pantomimist George Galvin, better known as Dan Leno — “The Funniest Man On Earth” (*DL*, 21; Ackroyd 2002c, 341)¹²⁴. All three of them spend time in the Reading Room of the British Museum where the Crees also are regular visitors. Sitting beside each other on the seats of the Reading Room, these men form an intriguing intertextual figure, and at the same time the library with all its occupants appears as a parallel image of Ackroyd’s palimpsestic London: “They were lost in their books, as the murmuring of all the inhabitants of the Reading Room rose towards the vast dome and set up a whispering echo like that of the voices in the fog of London” (*DL*, 46–47). Moreover, when the police begin to investigate the identity of the murderous “Limehouse Golem”, Gissing, Leno, and Marx all become suspects, although each of them is soon found to have an alibi. Gissing is suspected because of his earlier contact with the other prostitute victim, as he was trying to find his missing wife Nell, also a prostitute, whereas Dan Leno had earlier been a client of the murdered hosier, Mr Gerrard. Karl Marx, for his part, is a close friend of yet another victim of the golem, a Jewish scholar named Solomon Weil, who is brutally mutilated in his own home. A little while earlier Marx had paid his customary weekly visit to Weil for an “evening of philosophical discussion” on religion and Jewish mysticism, including the figure of the golem and its similarity to the homunculus (*DL*, 63). Weil had shown Marx a description of the golem in one of the books in his library, and later, when Weil’s body is found, his severed penis is discovered on the very same book, “decorating a long entry on the golem” (*DL*, 6).

¹²⁴ In his customary manner, however, Ackroyd adapts biographical and historical facts also with Dan Leno, moving Dan Leno’s year of birth a whole decade backwards to 1850. (See also Gibson and Wolfreys 2000, 20; and Chalupský 2016 208–209.)

6.3.3. Babylon

The original British edition title of the novel, *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*, amalgamates the mythology of one of London's ethnic subcultures with an intrinsic element of nineteenth-century London — the importance of theatres, music halls, and penny gaffs as an affordable amusement for the city's rapidly growing working-class population. Accordingly, the London of *Dan Leno* is the Victorian London familiar from the novels of Charles Dickens and the documentary articles of Henry Mayhew: a great and pulsating metropolis which also has its darker side in the form of extreme poverty, destitution, and crime — in other words, a modern “Babylon”, “a city whose splendour was its downfall” (Nead 2000, 3; see also Baron 1997, 264; Fulford 2011, *passim*). The image of London as Babylon — first used in the 1780s by the poet William Cowper — was, according to Lynda Nead (2000, 3), “a paradoxical image for the nineteenth-century city”:

It not only represented the most magnificent imperial city of the ancient world, but also conjured up images of the mystical Babylon of the Apocalypse. It was a place that symbolised material wonder and tumultuous destruction [- -]. Babylon and imperial Rome were indices of London's greatness and also warnings of the dangers of hubris. (Ibid.)

Victorian London was, indeed, an imperial city, the capital of an “empire on which the sun never sets”, and with its financial and job opportunities, wider marriage market, excitement, and general amusements, it attracted immigrants from the countryside as well as from abroad (Inwood 1998, 415). During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, London thus became the hub of the whole empire, both socially, commercially, and financially, and over the nineteenth century, the population of Greater London grew over sixfold to six and a half million in 1901 — a growth rate in a

class of its own even compared to other rapidly growing towns and cities in Britain and elsewhere in Europe (Inwood 1998, 411).¹²⁵ The majority of London's nineteenth-century immigrants came from the countryside, where birth and death rates had already begun to move into opposite directions in the eighteenth century. As only a small percentage of the increasing rural population could find employment in the countryside, the pull of the capital was stronger than ever before. (Inwood 1998, 411–416.)

However, in addition to domestic immigration, there was also a steady and gradually increasing flow of overseas immigrants seeking employment, especially from Ireland in the early nineteenth century but later progressively also from continental Europe. This part of the immigration flow was harder for Londoners to come to terms with — a situation which soon led to the growth of apprehension and hostility towards the newcomers. When the pogroms of the late nineteenth century increased the flow of Jewish refugees from Russia and Poland into the East End, Londoners' fears of an "alien 'invasion'" (Inwood 1998, 414) seemed to escalate out of proportion, especially considering the fact that the Jewish minority had already been an innate part of London's street scene for centuries¹²⁶, as were migrants of many other nationalities and ethnic groups. (Davies 2000, 822–823; Endelman 2002, 15–38, 128; Inwood 1998, 2, 414, 453–454; Palmer 2000, 101–106.) On the whole, Victorian London can be said to answer the description which Ackroyd gives of the city in his lecture "London luminaries and Cockney visionaries":

¹²⁵ See also *A Vision of Britain Through Time*; at <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10097836/cube/TOT_POP> Last accessed 10 May 2017.

¹²⁶ The Anglo-Jewish history dates back as far as to the eleventh century — with a 366-year gap after the expulsion edict in 1290 and before the beginning of resettlement in 1656 (Endelman 2002, 15–38).

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London has sucked up waves of immigration. [- -] Sometimes it even seems to me that the city itself creates the conditions of its own growth, that it somehow plays an active part in its own development like some complex organism slowly discovering its form. (Ackroyd 2002c, 342.)

Yet, on the underside of the Babylonian splendour of the growing city lurked the poverty and plight of the working class, for, despite all the opportunities, London could still not provide work for all the newcomers and casual labourers, and those who succeeded in getting jobs were mostly poorly paid. To quote Ackroyd, London “attracted the poor and then crushed them in its progress” since “the city of gold” was also “the city of death” (Ackroyd 2002c, 342). The rapid growth of the urban working class and of the number of urban poor also aroused alarm and unease among the middle-class citizens, both in London and in other metropolises (Tuan 1979, 233–234). The philosopher and revolutionary leader Friedrich Engels was among those who paid attention to this fundamental dichotomy of Victorian London (Palmer 2000, 65–66). In *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, written after a two-year stay in Manchester and first published in 1845, Engels notes the commercial success of London and Britain but at the same time also realizes the cost of it, chiefly paid by the lower-class workers:

This colossal centralisation, this heaping together of two and a half millions of human beings at one point, has multiplied the power of this two and a half millions a hundredfold; has raised London to the commercial capital of the world [- -]. [A]ll this is so vast, so impressive, that a man cannot collect himself, but is lost in the marvel of England’s greatness before he sets foot upon English soil.

But the sacrifices which all this has cost become apparent later. After roaming the streets of the capital a day or

two, making headway with difficulty through the human turmoil and the endless lines of vehicles, after visiting the slums of the metropolis, one realises for the first time that these Londoners have been forced to sacrifice the best qualities of their human nature, to bring to pass all the marvels of civilisation which crowd their city; that a hundred powers which slumbered within them have remained inactive, have been suppressed in order that a few might be developed more fully and multiply through union with those of others. (Engels 2005, "The Great Towns".)

Engels was by no means the only one paying attention to the miserable living conditions of the nineteenth-century London poor. Charles Dickens brought the condition of London's slum-dwellers and homeless poor to the attention of middle-class readers in his novels and journalism whereas Henry Mayhew documented the daily life of the London working class in his long series of articles, later published in book form under the title *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851). In *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*, the London visions of Dickens and Mayhew are fittingly brought together under the dome of the Reading Room, where Karl Marx is "dividing his attention between Tennyson's *In Memoriam* and *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens" and, in the next seat, John Cree is making "copious notes on Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*" (DL, 45, 57).¹²⁷ Thus, John Cree might also have read Mayhew's description of a penny gaff in the first volume of *London Labour and the London Poor*, where Mayhew writes

¹²⁷ In fact, Mayhew is mentioned in an excerpt from John Cree's diary, which is later revealed to be a fake made by his wife Elizabeth. Thus, the reader cannot, in the end, be totally sure if Mayhew really was on John Cree's reading list. However, John Cree's interests still apparently lie in the condition of the working class, as he is described in another chapter by the omniscient narrator as reading "a copy of Plumstead's *History of the London Poor* and Molton's *A Few Sighs from Hell* [- -] [b]oth books [- -] concerned with the life of the indigent and the vagrant in the capital" (DL, 44). Unlike Mayhew, however, Plumstead and Molton appear to be fictive authors, active only in Ackroyd's own literary universe.

about the life of the London “costermongers”, i.e. street sellers of greens and fish:

In many of the thoroughfares of London there are shops which have been turned into a kind of temporary theatre (admission one penny), where dancing and singing take place every night. Rude pictures of the performers are arranged outside, to give the front a gaudy and attractive look, and at night-time coloured lamps and transparencies are displayed to draw an audience. These places are called by the costers “Penny Gaffs;” and on a Monday night as many as six performances will take place, each one having its two hundred visitors. (Mayhew 1851, 40.)

When the costermongers happened to have more than a penny in their pocket, they might even visit the threepenny gallery of the large Coburg theatre — later known as the “Old Vic” — shouting and whistling at the actors (Inwood 1998, 659; Mayhew 1851, 18–20; Thomson 2006, 182). Thus, in Victorian London, theatre was as much a pastime of the working-class Londoners as it was an amusement of the upper classes — even though the form of theatre preferred by the separate social classes might vary (Inwood 1998, 659–660). Upper classes shunned the riotous working-class audiences and favoured opera and the more serious full-length “spoken drama” performed in London’s two grand “patent theatres” — the Theatres Royal in Covent Garden and Drury Lane — whereas London’s growing working-class population frequented the numerous “illegitimate theatres” specializing in pantomimes, circus acts, and musical burlettas (Inwood 1998, 658–666; Thomson 2006, 182–184).

The development of music halls from the early 1850s on continued the tradition of the earlier “illegitimate theatres” (Inwood 1998, 663). Music halls, which by the end of the 1860s had also largely replaced the old “penny gaffs”, offered their mainly working-class audiences a “mixture of

songs, sketches, and circus acts” (Inwood 1998, 663). In the period Ackroyd’s novel is set in, the early 1880s, the London music hall had reached its heyday, which lasted until the First World War, and during the 1880s, music halls also began to spread to the wealthier London neighbourhoods (Faulk 2004, 10–12; see also Wilson 2002, 521–524). The classification of theatres into “patent” and “illegitimate” theatres was also over, and thus for instance Dan Leno could perform his pantomimes in the Drury Lane Theatre as well (Thomson 2006, 184–199).¹²⁸

In *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*, the significance of the music hall for the working-class population is epitomized in the character of Dan Leno himself, who later becomes Elizabeth’s protector in her own budding career as a cross-dressing music-hall star. A performance by Dan Leno and his company is also Elizabeth’s first contact with the illusionary world of the stage, where even the sooty and grubby streets of London are elevated to another level or reality, to a “world of light” (*DL*, 20) beyond the scope of real-life memories:

There was much more in this vein, which seemed very tedious to Elizabeth, but eventually the curtain was pulled aside by a young girl in a large old-fashioned bonnet; it revealed a London street scene which, in the flickering gaslight, seemed to Elizabeth the most wonderful sight in the world. The only paintings she had ever seen had been the crude images daubed upon the boats by the riverside, and here was a picture of the Strand along which she had just walked — but how much more glorious and iridescent it now seemed, with its red and blue shopfronts, its tall lampposts, and its stalls and their goods piled high. This was better than any memory. (*DL*, 18–19.)

¹²⁸ For a discussion on theatricality in *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*, see Chalupský 2016, 203–215.

Elizabeth's spirits are then further lifted when Dan Leno appears on the stage and with his "strange comedy" and cross-dressing routine alleviates the "misery" of her own life: "there was no more pain now, and no more suffering". Afterwards, on leaving the theatre she feels "as if she had been banished from some world of light". (*DL*, 20.)

6.3.4. Actors and automatons

In *Dan Leno*, the worlds of overseas immigration and music hall meet in the unlikely character of the old Jewish scholar Solomon Weil. Weil lives in a lodging house in the East End, in "[t]he Jewish quarter of Limehouse" and, like Gissing, Leno, Marx, and the Crees, he, too, is a regular visitor in the Reading Room of the British Museum, even though he also has his own "large library of cabbalistic and esoteric learning" (*DL*, 5, 64). Yet, "volumes and manuscripts of Hasidic lore" are not his only object of interest, for "he also had a passion for the popular theatre of London, and had acquired a collection of sheet music from a printer's in Endell Street which specialized in the newest songs from the halls" (*DL*, 5, 65). He has been reading music-hall lyrics also on the day of Marx's last visit to him:

"[- -] Tell me now. What have you been reading today?"

"You would not believe me if I told you."

"Oh, you mean some hermetic scroll long hidden from the sight of men?"

"No. I have been reading the song sheets from the music halls. Sometimes I hear them sung in the streets, and they remind me of the old songs of our forefathers. Do you know 'My Shadow Is My Only Pal' or 'When These Old Clothes Were New'? They are wonderful little ditties. Songs of the poor. Songs of longing." (*DL*, 67.)

Weil then shows Marx a couple of sheets with photographs of Dan Leno in different costumes, and the sight of Leno dressed as “Sister Anne” makes Marx frown and compare the comedian to *Shekhinah*, the last of the ten *Sefirot*, i.e., the ten emanations of God according to cabbalistic lore, and the only female among them (Scholem 2007b, 244; Unterman, Horwitz, Dan, and Koren 2007, 442). However, Solomon Weil doesn’t agree, for instead of *Shekhinah*, the “shadow female”, he sees in the cross-dressing Dan Leno the mythical character of “Adam Kadmon”, the “Universal Man”, thus making, in Marx’s view, “a cabbala out of the music hall” (*DL*, 67).

The reference to Adam Kadmon is yet another link to *The House of Doctor Dee*, where the character of homunculus-cum-Matthew in his capacity as a representative of the novel’s various nested *loci* — the house, the city, and the nation — can also be read as resembling the Universal Man (see section 4.3.4 above). Similarly, in *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*, the character of Dan Leno, by virtue of his cross-dressing roles, appears to represent “male and female joined” (*DL*, 67), which in Weil’s view makes him an emanation of Adam Kadmon, the Universal or “Primordial” Man of cabbalistic lore (see also Scholem 2007a, 378–379). Furthermore, as in the relationship between Matthew and the homunculus, a certain kinship can be perceived between Dan Leno and the mythical creature of the golem, a kinship which transforms them into a curious double-faced personification of a special spirit of the city. In the present reading of the novel, as will be demonstrated in the following pages, the path towards the understanding of the foundation of their kinship can be traced through the figure of Dionysus, the ancient Greek god of wine, fertility, religious ecstasy and theatre.

In *Dan Leno*, the figure of the “Limehouse Golem” appears as the main murder suspect, haunting the city and arousing terror among the citizens.

The figure of the golem¹²⁹ originates from old Jewish legends, in which it is known as an artificially created humanoid creature, made from earth and brought to life by way of a magic process including the use of holy names (Scholem and Idel 2007, 735; see also Glinert 2001, *passim*). In Talmudic usage, it denotes “something unformed and imperfect”, whereas in philosophical usage it is interpreted as “matter without form” (Scholem and Idel 2007, 736). The legend of the golem gradually developed and acquired new characteristics, and, as a result, the golem began to be seen as a powerful and dangerous servant of its creator, who eventually must destroy his creation in order to prevent the golem from overpowering men. As a result, the idea of the golem became connected with a motif of “the unrestrained power of the elements”, able to cause “destruction and havoc” (*ibid.*, 737). An important component in the legends of the golem is that the golem is “human in form but not in essence” — in other words, that it is a lifeless being whose lack of a human soul is indicated by its lack of speech (Sherwin 1985, 7–9).

Thus, the golem is a kindred concept to homunculus: an artificial humanoid creature with distinct sombre undertones, created almost *ex nihilo*. In fact, the idea of the golem probably also had some effect on Paracelsus’s theory of the homunculus (Idel 1990, 185; Glinert 2001, 81–82). Since the nineteenth century, the figure of the golem has inspired numerous writers and artists, and, in the beginning of the twentieth century, it was made famous especially by Gustav Meyrink’s novel *The Golem* (1915), set in the ghetto of Prague. In Meyrink’s novel, the Golem is depicted as a mysterious figure, seen wandering around the town once every thirty-three years, usually in connection with incidents which seem to inflict horror among the citizens. An old puppeteer named Zwakh relates the story

¹²⁹ The word *golem* appears also in the *Bible*, even though only once, in the Psalms (Scholem and Idel 2007, 736).

of the Golem to the narrator-protagonist and ponders the possibility that the Golem might actually arise from the “never-changing thoughts that poison the air in the Ghetto”:

Just as on sultry days the static electricity builds up to unbearable tension until it discharges itself in lightning, could it not be that the steady build-up of those never-changing thoughts that poison the air in the Ghetto lead to a sudden, spasmodic discharge? A spiritual explosion blasting our unconscious dreams out into the light of day and creating, as the electricity does the lightning, a phantom that in expression, gait and behaviour, in every last detail, would reveal the symbol of the soul of the masses, if only we were able to interpret the secret language of forms? (Meyrink 2010, 59.)

Thus, in Meyrink’s novel, the Golem appears as an embodiment of the communal soul of the ghetto — and especially an incarnation of the darker aspects of that soul — and in this respect, Ackroyd’s usage of the golem figure strongly echoes Meyrink’s novel. Although Ackroyd’s golem is connected to the former Jewish quarters of London’s East End in particular, the golem still represents the city as a whole: “It was an emblem for the city which surrounded them and the search for the Limehouse Golem became, curiously enough, a search for the secret of London itself” (*DL*, 88). Later, in *Dan Leno*, a fictive newspaper announcement quotes “Dr Paley of the British Museum”, who “further informs us that the golem is always created within great cities and, by some awful instinct, is thoroughly acquainted with the streets and alleys of its birthplace” (*DL*, 216–217). Consequently, the golem seems to acquire characteristics of an urban *genius loci* which has a strong and sinister hold over the city and its inhabitants.

In the novel, Solomon Weil compares the golem to “the material envelope of the world”, which can “assume whatever shape we please to give

it" (*DL*, 68). In its ability to take different forms depending on people's expectations, the golem thus resembles an actor ready to change roles at a moment's notice, fulfilling the wishes of his audience. This is what Dan Leno does, too, in his pantomimes and impersonations, enabling people to recognize a reflection of their own lives in his different stage characters and comic routines. Thus, when Elizabeth first sees Dan Leno on stage, dressed as an old woman complaining about her "terrible state" caused by the visit of her "mean" daughter, Elizabeth laughs as she is suddenly "reminded of her mother, lying with her putrefying kidney" and of her own hostile relationship with her mother (*DL*, 20). The facility with which Dan Leno in an instant jumps from one role to another is also astonishing: "[T]hen after a few verses he sauntered off the stage with his hands in his pockets. A few moments later an old woman emerged— except that, as far as Elizabeth could tell, she was not really old at all. [- -] [S]he realized that this was the same boy, dressed in female clothes." (*DL*, 19.) This facility is of use in the last scene of the novel as well, where, after Aveline Mortimer's accidental hanging, Dan Leno takes on the role of "Elizabeth Cree" — the real "golem" responsible for the murders — and saves the performance of *Misery Junction*. The act is interpreted by the audience as an homage to Elizabeth's own past theatrical career as a cross-dressing comic actress in the vein of Dan Leno himself:

They understood the allusion at once, and laughed in relief after the scene of terror before — here was the hanged woman revived, and ready to start the fun. Here was Elizabeth Cree in another guise, just as she had been before when she played the "Older Brother" or "Little Victor's Daughter," and it was a source of joy and exhilaration that the great Dan Leno should impersonate her. (*DL*, 282.)

With his impersonations, Dan Leno thus seems to offer a kind of “shell” for his characters — and occasionally also for the Londoners in his audience, especially when they happen to recognize some part of their lives in the routine. Here, too, he resembles the golem, at least according to Solomon Weil’s description:

Of course we do not have to believe in golems literally. Surely not. That is why I read it in an allegorical sense, with the golem as an emblem of the *Klippoth* and a shell of degraded matter. But then what do we do? We give it life in our own image. We breathe our own spirit into its shape. And that, don’t you see, is what the visible world must be — a golem of giant size? (*DL*, 68.)

In Lurianic Kabbalah, the concept of *Kellipot* (*Klippoth*) is related to the origin of evil and refers to the shards of the broken “vessels” or *Sefirot* that contained divine light. After *Shevirah*, the so-called “Breaking of the Vessels”, sparks of the divine light were captured by the shards, which along with the divine sparks became the *Kellipot*, i.e. “the evil ‘husks’ or ‘shells’ of the *Sitra Achra*, the ‘Other Side’, a shadow realm that is the source of the world’s evil and negativity” (Drob 2009, 101; see also Jacobson 2010, 68; Scholem et al. 2007, *passim*). Similarly, the golem, too, can be seen as an evil shell, “a body without soul”, an automaton (Scholem and Idel 2007, 736). Moreover, being only “matter without form” (*ibid.*), it is also an obscure figure, disappearing the moment someone sees it. When, in the novel, the cloakroom attendant of the British Museum, together with his wife, sees the golem, they glimpse a “hooded figure”, which seems to vanish in the air almost instantly. In Weil’s interpretation,

[t]he world itself took that form for a moment because it was expected of it. It created that figure in the same way that it creates stars for us — and trees, and stones. It knows what we

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need, or expect, or dream of, and then it creates such things for us. (*DL*, 69.)

Thus, the golem is believed to know the citizens most intimately, recognizing their innermost wishes, dreams, fears, and memories. Whereas Dan Leno's performances and impersonations make the spectators laugh at their own peculiarities, the golem arouses horror but also "frenzied interest" (*DL*, 88) among the citizens, who find themselves faced with an unknown threat whose origins may — oddly enough — lie in the night side of their own souls:

It was almost as if they had been waiting impatiently for these murders to happen — as if the new conditions of the metropolis required some vivid identification, some flagrant confirmation of its status as the largest and darkest city of the world. (*Ibid.*)

6.3.5. The Cockney golem and the Dionysian inheritance

With its strange and sinister nature and its ability to wreak havoc among the citizens, the golem could be described in the words of Richard Lehan (1998,6) as a "disruptive force in the city". In this respect, it is related to such urban Gothic characters as Count Dracula, who brings chaos and vampirical contagion to Victorian London in Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897), or the evil Mr Hyde, the embodiment of the more atavistic and savage parts of Doctor Jekyll's personality in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) (Lehan 1998, 95–98; Mighall 1999, 145–153, 187–195). They are all characters that threaten the order and harmony of the city from within, thus representing a Dionysian element inherent in the urban structure (Lehan 1998, 6). The Dionysus myth

can be perceived as a manifestation of an unrestrainable primitive energy lurking in the shadows of the ordered and rational city, a symbol of a dark, ecstatic, and sensuous force, obnoxious especially to the Victorian middle class (Lehan 1998, 18, 90; Simonsuuri 1996, 91–97). The spirit of Dionysus lives in the carnival and is embodied by such literary stock characters as “the mysterious stranger” or “the man in the crowd” (Lehan 1998, 6).

The Dionysian heritage is also present in the music halls of Victorian London and in the careers of such comic performers as the famous Dan Leno — not only due to their being part of the inheritance of the ancient god of theatre whose name was once given to the Athenian cult festival, City Dionysia, birthplace of tragedy, comedy, and satyric drama, but also on account of the elements of chaos and carnivalesque reversal of gender roles and social order, innate in the theatrical pastime of the Victorian working classes (see also *BA*, s.v. “Great Dionysia”; Fischer-Lichte 2014, 75—76; Kivistö 2007, 264; Otto 1965, 197; Wilson 2002, 521—524). Thus, Dan Leno could even be titled the Victorian emanation of Dionysus himself, who in the eyes of his audience was a true god of laughter and merriment but whose comic routines also embraced the darker aspects of the life of the London poor. However, one could also endow him with the title of the High Priest of Victorian Babylon, as he performs his ludic rituals in the true place of worship of the Victorian working class, the music hall. At least, that is the connection Solomon Weil makes in the novel as he discusses the enthusiasm of the music-hall audience with Karl Marx: “But don’t you understand why they love it so? For them it is so sacred that they talk of the gods and of the pit. I even discovered, quite by chance, that many of these halls and little theatres were once chapels and churches.” (*DL*, 67–68.)

As for the character of the golem, in certain respects, it too appears to be an actor of sorts, giving a gory performance for its frantically interested urban audience. This is also Chief Inspector Kildare’s view, for which he

also finds an echo during an interview with Dan Leno on the Gerrard murders:

“But you see, this is my point. This murderer, this Limehouse Golem as they call him, seems to be acting as if he were in a blood tub off the Old Kent Road. Everything is very messy and very theatrical. It is a curious thing.”

Leno reflected for a few moments on this particular vision of the crimes. “I was thinking the same myself only the other day,” he said. “Much of it doesn’t seem real at all.”

“Of course, the deaths were real enough.”

“Yes but, as you say, the atmosphere surrounding them, the newspaper paragraphs, the crowds of spectators — it’s like being in some kind of penny gaff or theatre of variety.”
(*DL*, 204–205)

Thus, the novel presents us with a curious duo of an actor and an automaton, whose joint theatrical careers seem to embody the uncontrollable and outrageous Dionysian element — the Dionysiac madness and violent ecstasy — of the collective spirit of the city. As it happens, the real Dan Leno, known for the “manic energy” with which he jumped into his different roles, lost his mental balance during his final years (Wilson 2002, 524). According to Ackroyd, “[h]e played Mother Goose just once too often” and died “of exhaustion” at the age of forty-three (Ackroyd 2002c, 341). His funeral, however, became a display of Londoners’ reverence and affection towards him. As Ackroyd describes the event in his lecture on London luminaries and Cockney visionaries:

[O]n the occasion of his funeral many thousands of Londoners lined the streets of the city. They were mourning a man who had represented for them their lives and their condition; in his role as a shop-house waiter, a grass widow, a grocer’s assis-

tant, a lady of the old school, or simply ‘One Of The Unemployed’, he became to symbolize all the life and energy and variety of the city itself. (Ackroyd 2002c, 341.)

Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem should actually be read against Ackroyd’s other texts on the special mentality of London and especially of those artists and writers whom he has titled “the Cockney visionaries”¹³⁰ — a fellowship to which, in Ackroyd’s view, the real Dan Leno also belonged. The central constituents of the “Cockney visionary tradition” as defined by Ackroyd — i.e. theatricality, heterogeneity, horror, and religiousness — can also be discerned in *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*. Still, the novel’s most obvious “Cockney visionary” element is of course its theatricality, both on the level of its plot and setting and on the level of its narrative structure, consisting of short “scenes” or chapters. In Ackroyd’s view, theatricality is also a central attribute of the whole Cockney visionary tradition, discernible in the novels of Henry Fielding and Charles Dickens, as well as in the poetry of William Blake or in the paintings of J. M. W. Turner:

I am talking about a particular London sensibility that derives its energy from variety, from spectacle, and from display. I am talking about a sensibility in which pathos and comedy, high tragedy and low farce, are effortlessly combined. (Ackroyd 2002c, 345.)

According to Ackroyd (*ibid.*, 344), this combination of pathos and diversity is found especially in “the tunes of the London halls”:

If London could be turned into an allegorical personage in some neoclassical extravaganza, it would be heard singing these songs. They are powerful because they are charged with

¹³⁰ See also section 4.3.3 above.

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the real presence of place, just as much as the dark stones of London Wall or the steel surfaces of the Lloyds Building. These are the true melodies of London [- -]. (Ibid, 344–345.)

In the novel, the “true melodies of London” were of course sung also by Elizabeth Cree, the “real” golem of the story. Yet, although Elizabeth is in the end revealed to be the factual killer and is condemned to death for her crimes, the reader is still left with the feeling that the golem will return again, only then perhaps in another guise. “Here we are again!” are Elizabeth’s last words before her hanging, pronounced in the first chapter of the novel, and the same phrase is repeated also on the last page of the novel, by Dan Leno who has jumped into the role of Elizabeth Cree in *Misery Junction* — only this time there is an emphasis on the word “again” (DL, 2, 282). The return of the London golem — perhaps once in every thirty-three years like the Prague golem in Meyrink’s novel — will also guarantee that the collective memory of the city does not change into history or cultural memory — as defined by Jan Assmann — but continues to grasp “events and persons directly” (Halbwachs 1980, 106; see also Assmann 1995, 127; Assmann 2008, *passim*; see also section 3.2.4 above).

6.4. The two faces of the threatened city

In the two novels discussed above, *Mother London* by Michael Moorcock and *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* by Peter Ackroyd, the spirit of the suffering city receives two very different interpretations. In *Mother London*, the threatened city survives because the city as a collective entity is able to develop a strong sense of endurance in the face of the outer threat. “The story of the Blitz” thus becomes a collective myth, both supporting the individual citizens and binding them together, strengthening the local

identity in the process. It becomes one of those “special myths” known from the history of every old city, at least according to David Mummery. (*ML*, 5.) “London endures. Her stories endure”, declares Josef Kiss in another scene (*ML*, 110–111).

At times, the myth of London’s endurance grows to nearly biblical dimensions in *Mother London*. There are no shadows of a dark Babylon in the blitzed city but, instead, the strong glow of a great city living its Golden Age, like ancient Athens or Rome. In a scene near the midpoint of the novel, in a chapter set in the year 1944, Josef Kiss has a dream-like vision of his hometown, seeing a procession of “gypsy caravans”, farmers, and other countryfolk, “carrying goods towards London Bridge to provision all those who crowd together on the other side” (*ML*, 221). It is a vision of a great city radiating its influence from the centre of the whole world:

It is as if the rest of the nation is perpetually in motion on the city’s periphery, as if London is the hub around which all else revolves, the ordering, civilising, progressive force which influences first the Home Counties, then the entire nation, ultimately the Empire and through the Empire the Globe itself: a city more powerful than all cities before it, perhaps more powerful than all cities will ever be, for New York cannot equal it, nor Washington, nor any city Josef Kiss can imagine. London is the last capital of the great city-based civilisations and henceforth the new empires shall be built in the name of ideals and crusades, in the name of holy abstractions. The Golden Age of cities has achieved its absolute fulfilment. London has surely reached her maximum expansion and must now begin to shrink until, as Athens or Rome, her memory shall be greater and more enduring than her stones. (*Ibid.*)

However, the vision is also a prophecy of urban decay, at least on a material level, connecting the urban vision of Moorcock to the images of urban destruction in Maureen Duffy’s *Capital* or the nullification of urban history by

reversal as imagined in Peter Ackroyd's *The House of Doctor Dee* (see chapter 4 above). Ancient Athens and Rome are now only memories, and, in Josef Kiss's vision, that will be London's fate, too. However, even though stones crumble, the memory of London's Golden Age will live on and thus perhaps the memory of its endurance, too.

In *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*, however, the reader meets a completely different urban vision which emphasizes the nightside of the metropolis. If in *Mother London* the *genius Londinii* is dressed in the sparkling cape of collective endurance, in *Dan Leno* its earthen and blood-stained face glowers at us from under the tattered hood of a hungry London down-and-outer. Still, in the urban vision of the latter novel, a grim kind of endurance and continuity surfaces as well — in the form of the dark deeds of the ever-returning “golem”. As Elizabeth/golem writes about the murder of the Gerrard family in the faked diary of John Cree:

Once more I knew that I was on hallowed ground, and I gave thanks on behalf of the shopman and his family. They were about to become patterns of eternity, and in their own wounds reflect the inflictions of recurrent time. To die on the same spot as the famous Marrs¹³¹ — and to die in the same fashion — why, it is a great testimony to the power of the city over men. (DL, 160.)

Yet, the urban vision of *Dan Leno* is not totally dark, and the sinister genius of the *golem Londinii* appears to have a more positive balancing force in the community of the citizens as a whole. At least this is the impression George Gissing gets in the novel when he gets lost one night in the darker

¹³¹ Marr is the surname of the victims of the real-life Ratcliffe Highway murders in 1811.

streets and alleys of London and meets all kinds of workers, beggars, and other representatives of the lower classes of the city:

He stayed a few minutes longer until he believed it was safe to venture out again into the night; he turned down another lane and, to his great relief, found himself in a street that led back down to the Strand. He had really heard tonight what “man has ever said” and “woman whispered”— and if the air indeed were one vast library, one great vessel in which all the noises of the city were preserved, then nothing need be lost. Not one voice, or laugh, or threat, or song, or footfall, but it reverberated through eternity. He remembered reading in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* of an ancient myth which supposed that all lost things could be discovered on the other side of the moon. And perhaps there was such a place where perpetual, infinite, London would one day be found. But then perhaps he had found it already — perhaps it was in him, and in each of the people he had encountered that night. (*DL*, 245–246.)

—7—

Displaced memories

For those who pass it without entering,
the city is one thing; it is another for those who are
trapped by it and never leave. There is the city where
you arrive for the first time; and there is another city
which you leave never to return.

— Italo Calvino: *Invisible Cities*

7.1. Migrating memories

The arrival of a former troopship, *Empire Windrush*, at Tilbury Docks on the morning of the 22nd of June in 1948 has often been cited as a symbolically important event marking the beginning of a new flow of immigration from the British colonies in the West Indies. On board were officially 492 passengers, most of them young Jamaican men whose passage across the Atlantic was inspired by the British Nationality Act of 1948, which confirmed the right of all British Commonwealth citizens and the citizens of the British colonies to settle in Britain. As the post-war West Indies suffered from unemployment and rapid population growth, many Caribbeans

decided to take advantage of the new opportunity and to migrate into Britain. (Ball 2004, 112; Graham 2011, 116; Inwood 1998, 854–858; Lange 1999, 11; McLeod 2004, 24–40.) They became part of the so-called “Windrush generation”, a designation which in addition to the Caribbean immigrants also referred to other post-war newcomers from the British Commonwealth and from other countries (Wills 2017, 11). However, the yearly number of newcomers specifically from the West Indies stayed comparatively low during the following years, despite the swift employment of and warm welcome to the first Windrush immigrants (Inwood 1998, 856; Nasta 2006; Sandhu 2003, 141). Still, the British public had their prejudices, also referred to by the Trinidadian-born author Sam Selvon in his novel *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), which described the experiences of the West Indian immigrants in post-war London:

And this sort of thing was happening at a time when the English people starting to make rab about how too much West Indians coming to the country: this was a time, when any corner you turn, is ten to one you bound to bounce up a spade. In fact, the boys all over London, it ain’t have a place where you wouldn’t find them, and big discussion going on in parliament about the situation, though the old Brit’n too diplomatic to clamp down on the boys or to do anything drastic like stop them from coming to the Mother Country. (Selvon 2006, 2.)

Yet, the passengers on board *SS Empire Windrush* were by no means the first immigrants to sail to Britain in hope of a better future, for the history of Britain — and London — has been a long succession of waves of newcomers, beginning with the first prehistoric settlers who came over the land-bridge when the British Isles were still a peninsula projecting from the shoulder of the European continent, and continuing with Romans, Angles, Saxons, Vikings, Normans, medieval traders and merchants — Jews, Italians, and Germans — and later, in the sixteenth century, with religious

refugees from France and the Low Countries. Then, in the late nineteenth century, came the Jewish refugees from Russia and Poland,¹³² followed by another wave of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria during the Second World War. More recently, the Commonwealth immigration — including not only Caribbean newcomers but also migration from the Asian Commonwealth, especially from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh — has been accompanied by a constant inflow of migrants from other countries as well. (Davies 2000, 7–8; Porter 1998, xvii–xviii; Rastogi and Stitt 2008, 1; Sandhu 2003, 113.) London’s history thus “begins with ‘foreigners’” (Porter 1998, xvii), and as a result of all the different waves of immigrants which the city has attracted over the past millennia, today’s London is, in Roy Porter’s (1998, xviii) words, “a great experiment in a polyglot and multi-racial society”. Especially since the Second World War, this multi-layered history of immigration has also resulted in a kaleidoscopic literary London, where the voices of the newcomers and their children are heard much more clearly than before.

As the history of the British Isles shows, migration and mobility have always been essential elements in the evolution of human societies. However, over the last hundred years, global mobility — both voluntary and forced — has accelerated unprecedentedly. As Per Gustafson (2014, 60) notes, the situation poses a challenge for geographers and social scientists who study the significance of place and place attachment in people’s lives and raises the question of the fate of “people’s emotional bonds with place in a highly mobile society” (ibid.). Consequently, it also raises the question of the fate of *genius loci*.

¹³² Cf. section 6.3.3 above.

The growth of human mobility has also exposed a juxtaposition of attitudes, in which one party — including humanistic geographers and environmental psychologists among others — rates place attachment and local roots as a positive and important phenomenon and mobility as “potentially bad”, whereas the other associates mobility with “development, personal growth, and cosmopolitan open-mindedness” and sees place attachment as a representative of “parochialism and restricted opportunities” (Gustafson 2014, 61). As Maria Lewicka (2011, 209) aptly formulates the new concern of scholars within place studies:

If place is defined, like it was in the classical works of Tuan (1975, 1977) or Relph (1976), through its historical continuity, unique character, boundedness, and opportunity for rest, then modernity, globalization, fast speed, and virtualization of everyday life should destroy places and undermine people’s meaningful relations with them (sense of place, place attachment). Do studies on place and place attachment still have any ecological validity then?

However, as Per Gustafson (2001a, *passim*; 2014, *passim*) remarks, the underlying assumption of the essential opposition of place attachment and mobility is, in fact, defective as it does not take into account the qualitative differences and variations in people-place relationships. Studies have shown that instead of the traditional idea of place attachment as an attachment to a home place, founded on lifelong residence, there are in fact several types of both place attachment and non-attachment. Thus, mobility does not categorically rule out attachment but may instead enable mobile persons to develop attachments to multiple places. (*Ibid.*)

Borrowing a pair of homonymic terms used by migration scholars since the mid-1990s, Gustafson writes about this division as “roots” versus “routes”, emphasizing the intermingling of these two ostensibly opposing approaches in the modern world (see also Gilroy 1993, *passim*; Hall 1995,

207). As Gustafson (2001a, 670) notes, “[r]oots has long been an important metaphor for place attachment in Western society [- -] linking people to place, identity to territory” (see also Malkki 1992, *passim*). However, according to current understanding, in today’s globalized and mobile world people-place relationships can also be discussed in terms of routes (Gustafson 2001a, 670). Yet, roots and routes should be considered as neither absolute opposites nor mutually exclusive. On the contrary, roots and routes — or place attachment and mobility — ought to be perceived as complementary. (Gustafson 2001a, 670, 679; see also Clifford 1997, 3–4). Thus, in the following chapter, I shall read Zadie Smith’s debut novel *White Teeth* (2000) in the light of this metaphoric duality of roots and routes, at the same time pondering on the implications of mobility and immigration on the concept of *genius loci*.

7.2. Treating root canals in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*

7.2.1. The immigrant experiment

This has been the century of strangers, brown, yellow and white. This has been the century of the great immigrant experiment. It is only this late in the day that you can walk into a playground and find Isaac Leung by the fish pond, Danny Rahman in the football cage, Quang O'Rourke bouncing a basketball, and Irie Jones humming a tune. Children with first and last names on a direct collision course. Names that secrete within them mass exodus, cramped boats and planes, cold arrivals, medical checks. It is only this late in the day, and possibly only in Willesden, that you can find best friends Sita and Sharon, constantly mistaken for each other because Sita is white (her mother liked the name) and Sharon is Pakistani (her mother thought it best — less trouble). (*WT*, 326–327.)¹³³

With its broad and diverse, at times even Dickensian gallery of characters encompassing both Caribbean and Asian immigrants as well as members of the Anglo-Jewish minority and a self-proclaimed specimen of “[g]ood honest English stock” (*WT*, 99), Zadie Smith’s gently satiric debut novel *White Teeth* (2000; henceforth referred to as *WT*) provides a cross-section of the ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity of the postcolonial late twentieth-century London. In the novel, Smith — herself a second-generation immigrant with a Jamaican mother and an English father — explores the various encounters, frictions and alignments inside a tangled network of

¹³³ Sebastian Groes (2011, 228) reads the passage as a “direct parody” of a similar passage in Martin Amis’s novel *Money* (1984), a passage which in Groes’s reading is a “representation of the London landscape as a narrated space that has lost coherence” (*ibid.*, 176).

characters encompassing up to four generations of immigrant families living in Willesden, a neighbourhood in north-west London.

The first immigrant generation of the novel includes the Jamaican-born Bowdens — Hortense and her lethargic husband Darcus — and a Bangladeshi couple, Samad and Alsana Iqbal. The Bowdens' daughter Clara can also be counted among the first-generation immigrants, as she was already seventeen when she moved to Britain with her mother. However, in some respects, her attitude to her ethnic and cultural background resembles that of a second-generation immigrant — i.e. someone who is either born to immigrant parents or who has come to the country at a very young age (Levitt and Waters 2002, 1, see also Lee 2008b, 7).¹³⁴ As for the Iqbals' London born twin boys Magid and Millat, they clearly belong to the second immigrant generation, whereas Irie Jones, a classmate of Magid and Millat and the daughter of Clara and Archibald Jones, an Englishman twenty-eight years Clara's senior, is another borderline case like her mother.¹³⁵ Irie's unborn daughter — whose father is either one of the identical Iqbal twins, with both of whom Irie made love on the same night— then belongs to either the third or the fourth immigrant generation, depending on the method of counting. Still a third family, the Chalfens, incorporates also the Anglo-Jewish minority in the novel's rich gallery of characters via father Marcus, "an intellectual Jew" (*WT*, 309), his wife Joyce, "a lapsed-Catholic

¹³⁴ As Lee (2008b, 7) further elaborates, it is generally assumed that a first-generation immigrant is someone who has "lived long enough in the home country to make them in some way culturally distinct from those in the host country". Occasionally, an even more precise definition is used, according to which Clara Bowden could be referred to as belonging to the "one and a half generation" — a term denoting immigrants who arrived at the host country before their eighteenth birthday (ibid.).

¹³⁵ Irie Jones could actually be defined as a representative of the "two and half generation", i.e. someone who has one immigrant and one local-born parent (Lee 2008b, 7).

horticulturalist feminist” (ibid.), and their four sons, the eldest of whom, Joshua, is a classmate of Irie and Millat.

As the self-proclaimed epithets of Marcus and Joyce Chalfen indicate, ethnicity is not the only defining feature in the lives of the characters in *White Teeth*. Religious — or in some cases ideological — background plays at least as important a role in determining their life paths and personal choices (see also Ringrose 2011, *passim*).

Hortense Bowden — born as a result of the sexual abuse of a young Jamaican girl by an Englishman in the early twentieth-century Kingston — is an ardent Jehovah’s Witness whose life is dedicated to an eager anticipation of the Armageddon. She has inherited her religious conviction from her mother, Ambrose, and considers the biblical circumstances of her own birth in a collapsing cathedral amidst the great Kingston earthquake in 1907 as an omen that “the Lord wanted to show [her] a miracle” (*WT*, 34). By contrast, Clara Jones, née Bowden, abandons her mother’s religion at the age of nineteen, acting in reverse to her soon-to-be ex-boyfriend Ryan who befriends Hortense and becomes a fierce convert.

As for the Iqbals, Islam forms the religious background of their family, although their attitude to the teachings of their religion is fairly liberal. Only after Samad’s compunctions due to his illicit affair with his children’s music teacher, Poppy, does his outlook change. To make amends for his adultery, he decides — unbeknownst to his wife — to send one of the twins “to a better life” back in Bangladesh (*WT*, 194). Because Samad cannot afford the journey for both of his sons, he has to make a difficult decision, and, in the end, it is the first-born of the twins, Magid, who is sent to Bangladesh at the age of ten. Yet, contrary to the expectations of his father, in Bangladesh Magid grows to become — in Samad’s words — “a pukka Englishman, white suited, silly wig lawyer” (*WT*, 407), whereas the home-staying twin, Millat, transforms from a marijuana-smoking philanderer to a

“fully paid-up green bow-tie-wearing fundamentalist terrorist” (ibid.), joining the “Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation”, or, “KEVIN” (*WT*, 295).

The Chalfens, for their part, are a secularized and scientific-minded family who playfully call their shared view of life “Chalfenism”. Marcus is engrossed in his study on genetic engineering, whereas Joyce is enthusiastic about cultivating not only plants but also human seedlings — i.e. Irie and Millat, who have been condemned with Joshua to a two-month after-school study programme at the Chalfens for smoking marijuana on the school premises. As a result, Irie is drawn into “Chalfenism” and its atheistic philosophy of life, whereas Millat slowly gravitates towards the fundamentalist Islamism of KEVIN, despite Joyce Chalfen’s attempts to help him.

Joshua Chalfen, however, distances himself from his parents and their scientific ideology and joins an organization called “FATE” — an acronym for “Fighting Animal Torture and Exploitation” (*WT*, 403) — which has Marcus Chalfen’s revolutionary genetic engineering project “Future-Mouse” as its imminent target. Coincidentally, FutureMouse is targeted by both KEVIN and the Jehovah’s Witnesses as well — a situation which culminates in the final pages of the novel as all the main characters gather at a press conference on FutureMouse on New Year’s Eve 1992.

Lastly, Archibald, or Archie, Jones is a firm believer in the all-inclusive wisdom of coin tossing, trusting its verdict before every minor or major decision in his life. Thus, a coin is responsible also for Archie’s war wound back in 1945, as he is unable to decide whether to execute a young French doctor who has reputedly been working for the Nazis. The dilemma is solved when Archie stoops to pick up the misflipped coin and the doctor shoots Archie in the leg and flees. However, forty-seven years later, Archie and Doctor Perret meet again at the press conference of the FutureMouse project, Perret having acted as a mentor for Marcus Chalfen. There, this

time “with no coin to help him” (WT, 533), Archie once again gets a bullet in his leg as he lunges in the way of a gunshot aimed at Perret by Millat Iqbal.

7.2.2. False teeth and decaying roots

Ultimately, *White Teeth* is a novel about roots and their effect on people’s lives, both in good and bad. The main theme is implied already in the title of the novel, which also includes the novel’s main metaphor: teeth. In the multicultural and colourful gallery of characters, white teeth are the most obvious common denominator, and, like their owners, teeth, too, have roots. Occasionally, however, the root of a tooth may decay and, to save the tooth, the infected pulp has to be removed in a root canal treatment, and the same goes also for some of the characters in the novel concerning their own roots, i.e. their personal past or their family history. Thus, the “root canals” of Hortense, Archie, Samad, and Mangal Pande — a famous ancestor of Samad — each get their “treatments”, too, referred to also in the respective chapter titles (see also Ball 2004, 236).

Hortense’s roots lie in the Jamaican soil and in the experiences of her abused young mother, Ambrose, at the hands of a drunken English captain, who thus leaves “an unforgotten trace of bad blood in the Bowdens” (WT, 356). Yet, Hortense is also deeply rooted in her religion, to which her mother Ambrose converted during her pregnancy. In Hortense’s life, the influence of her religious inheritance actually parallels that of an immemorial collective memory, osmotically transferred between generations:

The Truth entered the Bowdens that winter of 1906 and flowed through the blood stream directly from Ambrosia to Hortense. [- -] [E]ven in her mother’s stomach each word of Mr Russell’s *Millennial Dawn*, as it was read to Ambrosia night after night, passed as if by osmosis into Hortense’s soul. Only

this would explain why it felt like a ‘remembrance’ to read the six volumes years later in adult life; why she could cover pages with her hand and quote them from memory, though she had never read them before. It is for this reason that any root canal of Hortense must go right to the very beginning, because she was there; she remembers [- -]. (WT, 359.)

As for Archie’s and Samad’s friendship, it sprouts in the Balkans in April 1945, when they are both serving as privates in a five-man tank during the last weeks of the Second World War. Their friendship is rekindled again in 1973, when Samad moves from Bangladesh to Britain with his young bride, Alsana, but its root had already started to decay in 1945 when Archie left Samad uninformed of Doctor Perret’s escape, the truth of which dawns Samad only in the final scene of the novel. However, Samad also has his own family roots, lying back in the soil of Bangladesh and personified in the shape of his great-grandfather Mangal Pande, who “shot the first hateful pigfat-smeared bullet” (WT, 87) in the Indian Mutiny against British rule in 1857 and is therefore remembered as a freedom fighter in India (BA, s.v. “Mangal Pandey”).¹³⁶ For Samad, the story of Mangal Pande acts as his primary root, on which he leans whenever the winds of his life threaten to become tempestuous, for instance when he defends Poppy against the curses of an aggressive female tramp:

Poppy wiped away a frightened tear and sighed. She said, ‘Calm in a crisis. Impressive.’ Samad, increasingly given to visions, saw that great-grandfather of his, Mangal Pande, flailing

¹³⁶ Mangal Pandey’s (1827–1857) attack on British officers at the garrison in Barrackpore in March 1857 is said to have triggered the Indian Mutiny, also known as the Sepoy Mutiny. In *White Teeth*, the name is given as “Mangal Pande”. (BA, s.v. “Mangal Pandey”, <<http://academic.eb.com.libproxy.helsinki.fi/levels/collegiate/article/Mangal-Pandey/605722>> Last accessed 6 October, 2017.)

with a musket; fighting against the new, holding on to tradition. 'It runs in the family,' he said. (*WT*, 180.)

In addition to the historical root canal treatments, the pervading dental metaphor of the novel extends to a few other chapters and their titles, too. For instance, a chapter entitled "Teething trouble" tells the story of the young bucktoothed Clara Bowden losing both her mother's religion and her prominent front teeth, a scooter accident with her boyfriend Ryan contributing to both losses while at the same time fortifying the budding faith of the uninjured Ryan. Soon afterwards, Clara meets Archie and gets "a perfect set of false teeth" (*WT*, 49) just before their wedding. The falsity of her teeth, however, remains a secret from Clara's and Archie's daughter Irie for years and is revealed only when the sixteen-year-old Irie trips over a glass of water on his parents' bedroom floor and, to her horror, notices "[t]he front set of some false teeth, with no mouth attached to them [- -] bearing down upon her right foot" (*WT*, 378). The discovery suddenly explains to Irie her mother's odd lisping "midnight voice" as well as the "perfect daytime straightness and whiteness" (*ibid.*).

Clara's perfectly straight and white false teeth can thus be read as a symbol of her assimilation into Britain, which extends even to her losing her Jamaican accent as soon as she has married Archie.¹³⁷ With her false teeth, Clara conceals not just the gap in her upper jaw but also the less visible hollow left by the uprooting of her religious legacy and her place of growth, Jamaica. Unfortunately, though, a set of false teeth, however perfect, does not have roots, and thus the hollow left by her discarded past is metaphorically revealed every night in her toothless lisp. Moreover, the rejected heritage resurfaces in Irie, on whose face Clara's buck teeth meet

¹³⁷ Similarly, in Peter Ackroyd's *Three Brothers* Daniel Hanway distances himself from his inheritance by discarding his cockney accent. (See section 5.2.3 above.)

Archie's "nose that [ends] in a natural onion-bulb swelling like W. C. Fields's" (*WT*, 97). Although Irie has her own brief identity crisis, which manifests itself in her desperate attempts to straighten and dye her curly African hair, among all the characters of *White Teeth*, she is the one who eventually is the most at ease with her heritage. Later — as told in the "end-games" episode in the final pages of the novel — she also travels to her ancestral Jamaica with her little girl, her grandmother Hortense, and Joshua Chalfen, who has become her lover. She even plans to visit Africa at some point — an idea which Clara cannot approve of.¹³⁸

Still two more chapters revolve around the dental theme of the novel. One of them — "Canines: The Ripping Teeth" — presents the Chalfens, who have taken Irie and Millat under their wing and whom the mistrustful Alsana therefore calls "Chaffinches – little scavenging English birds pecking at all the best seeds": "Those birds do the same to my bay leaves as these people do to my boy. But they are worse; they are like birds with teeth, with sharp little canines – they don't just steal, they rip apart!" (*WT*, 344.) In Alsana's opinion, the Chalfens are tearing her family apart by "Englishifying" Millat, in other words by "deliberately leading him away from his culture and his family and his religion" (*WT*, 345). Again, it is a question of roots and uprooting. While Samad has sent Magid to Bangladesh to grow solid roots into the soil of his ancestral homeland, Alsana is worried about the roots of their other son. Yet, against their expectations, it is Magid who gets uprooted from his culture whereas the radicalized Millat eventually grows a deep root into his family's religion — albeit a badly crooked one.

As for the chapter entitled "Molars", it describes an evening in September 1984, when the adulterous Samad is travelling to Poppy's flat for an

¹³⁸ Irie's attitude to her past has also been contested, and thus, for example, John Clement Ball (2004, 238) sees her, too, "[railing] against allowing past involvements to overdetermine present and future ones".

overnight visit while Magid, Millat, and Irie — all of them nine years old at the time — are paying a charity visit to an old man as a school assignment. The toothless Mr Hamilton is unable to eat the harvest gifts brought by the children, which inspires him to lecture them on the importance of tooth brushing:

‘One sometimes forgets the significance of one’s teeth. We’re not like the lower animals — teeth replaced regularly and all that — we’re of the mammals, you see. And mammals only get two chances, with teeth. More sugar?’ (*WT*, 171.)

After a racist digression on the role of the locals’ white teeth in his own survival in Congo, Mr Hamilton proceeds to a lesson on the third molars — also known as the wisdom teeth — and the episode again highlights the metaphorical impact of the novel’s dental and odontological motif and its link to the theme of inheritance. In his monologue, Mr Hamilton reminds the children that the third molars “are the only part of the body that a man must grow into” (*WT*, 173): “Because they’re your father’s teeth, you see, wisdom teeth are passed down by the father, I’m certain of it. So you must be big enough for them.” (*Ibid.*) Difficulties arise if one is not ready or “big enough” to receive their inheritance — which Samad’s sons obviously are not:

Because if not — oh dear me, they grow crooked or any which way, or refuse to grow at all. They stay locked up there with the bone — an impaction, I believe, is the term — and terrible, terrible infection ensues. (*WT*, 173.)

When Smith then moves the spotlight onto the compunctious Samad, whose mood fluctuates between the ancestral pride arising from his connection to Mangal Pande on the one hand and qualms about his conduct

with Poppy on the other, the thought of the wisdom teeth as paternal inheritance into which one must grow suddenly develops new satirical tones. “Have [the third molars] out and brush three times a day, if my advice means anything” (*WT*, 173) is Mr Hamilton’s advice to the children, which Samad would probably echo, in order to prevent the inheritance and the “sins of the Eastern father [to] be visited upon the Western sons” (*WT*, 161) — especially after he suddenly spots his twin boys waving to him and Poppy from a nearby bandstand. At that very moment, as if to emphasize the importance of nurturing one’s inheritance, Poppy hands Samad a toothbrush she has bought for him to use at her home.

The extended dental metaphor of *White Teeth* culminates in Irie’s decision to become a dentist — even though the idea is not originally her own but comes from the patronizing Marcus Chalfen, who considers Irie to be incapable of succeeding in “hard science” or medicine: “She could try medicine, I suppose, but even there you need a little bit more chutzpah than she’s got ... so it might have to be dentistry for our Irie (she could fix her own teeth at least)” (*WT*, 368). Because Irie is “like her mother, like her father – a great reinventor of herself, a great make-doer” (*ibid.*), she is not offended but consents to the suggestion. Among the three second-generation immigrant protagonists of the novel, Irie is the most balanced and the most accepting of her inheritance, and it is through this attitude that the infected root canals and third molars of the culturally uprooted immigrants may be healed — at least that seems to be the message relayed by Smith via the character of Irie Jones and her choice of career.

Although thematically the novel mainly leans on its dental metaphor, there are, however, also a few separate arboreal occurrences of the metaphoric motif of roots, as for instance in Samad’s wish that in Bangladesh Magid would grow “deep roots that no storm or gale could displace” (*WT*, 193), or in a “mammoth tree” — “the kind endemic to North London” —

that gets uprooted by storm winds and, tearing “itself from the dog shit and the concrete”, falls over Archie’s and Clara’s house where the Iqbals have also come to shelter from the storm (WT, 226). There is also a “prophetic” letter from a former Swedish track cyclist and Archie’s fellow competitor in the 1948 London Olympics, Horst Ibelgaufts, which arrives just when Samad is pondering which of the twins he should send back to Bangladesh. In the letter, Ibelgaufts tells of how he has finally felled an old oak from his garden and how the “weaker seeds” now get more light and have begun to thrive: “I had been suffering under the misapprehension all these years that I was simply an indifferent gardener — when all the time it was that grand old tree, taking up half the garden with its roots and not allowing anything else to grow” (WT, 195). Although Archie interprets the story as a sign that Millat should be “chopped down” and sent away, the readers — and probably Samad himself, too — are tempted to read Horst’s story as an allegory of the Iqbal family, where Samad’s own strong roots in his homeland and its cultural inheritance threaten to suffocate the lives of his family members, because “to Samad, [- -] tradition was culture, and culture led to roots, and these were good [- -]” (WT, 193).

7.2.3. Third spaces and neutral places

‘[Y]ou look very exotic. Where are you from, if you don’t mind me asking?’ ‘Willesden,’ said Irie and Millat simultaneously. ‘Yes, yes, of course, but where originally?’ ‘Oh,’ said Millat, putting on what he called a *bud-bud-ding-ding* accent. ‘You are meaning where from am I *originally*.’ Joyce looked confused. ‘Yes, *originally*.’ ‘Whitechapel,’ said Millat, pulling out a fag. ‘Via the Royal London Hospital and the 207 bus.’ (WT, 319; italics in the original.)

When Irie and Millat visit the Chalfens for the first time, Joyce Chalfen is curious about their origins: where are these two exotic-looking teenagers

from? Their answer to Joyce's query, however, is automatic: they are — first and foremost — from Willesden, London, for Willesden is the only home they have ever had.¹³⁹ Yet, it appears that Irie and Millat themselves, too, occasionally fall into the trap of asking about “origins”, as for instance when Millat is introduced to a black girl by one of his “Brothers” from KEVIN:

‘This is Sister Aeyisha,’ said Brother Tyrone, straightening Millat’s green bow-tie and pushing him towards a tiny, beautiful black girl, with almond eyes and high cheekbones. ‘She’s an African goddess.’ ‘Really?’ said Millat, impressed. ‘Whereabouts you from?’ ‘Clapham North,’ said Sister Aeyisha, with a shy smile. (WT, 371.)

The shifting local identities of the second-generation immigrants in *White Teeth* thus reflect the generational differences in attitudes to the homeland and to the ethnic and cultural background of one’s family observed by researchers in migration studies (Lee 2008a, viii; Lee 2008b, 10; Suárez-Orozco, Carhill, and Chuang 2011, 11). While first-generation immigrants still mostly maintain at least an emotional connection to their homeland and thus have two “homes”, for the second generation the identification process is more complex (Huang, Ramshaw, and Norman 2016, 63; Portes and Rumbaut 2001, 150)¹⁴⁰. They live in-between lives, with in-between

¹³⁹ Ged Pope (2015, 168) notes the way in which Smith’s Willesden — as a “space of hybridity” — is a “move away from the costive, claustrophobic suburb of much suburban fiction”.

¹⁴⁰ It should be noted, however, that for the first-generation migrant, too, the former home country may have transformed into an “imaginary homeland”, to borrow a term introduced by Salman Rushdie. As Rushdie (1992, 10) describes his relationship to his native India: “[O]ur physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind”. (RUSHDIE, Salman 1992: *Imaginary Homelands. Essays and Criticism 1981–1991*. New York: Penguin.)

identities, trying to “define themselves in relation to multiple reference groups” (ibid.). In a way, their position could well be described by the adverb “yonder” — a word used by the American author Siri Hustvedt to illustrate her own hovering between her Norwegian roots and her American childhood in Minnesota. Hustvedt quotes his father’s definition of “yonder” as referring to a place “between here and there”, which makes the word a “shifter”, i.e. a “word whose referent can only be understood from its context” (Hustvedt 2013, 7; *OED*, s.v. “shifter, n.”)¹⁴¹. Thus, shifters “are animated by the speaker and move accordingly”, which “[i]n linguistic terms [- -] means that you can never really find yourself *yonder*” (Hustvedt 2013, 7; her italics).

Still, the experience of vacillating identity and “the juggling of competing allegiances and attachments” (Portes and Rumbaut 2001, 150) is not totally alien to first-generation immigrants either. As Clair Wills (2017, 10) notes about the first-generation immigrants in post-war Britain:

Immigrants from Europe and the Commonwealth differed in all sorts of ways but what they shared was the experience of belonging securely neither to the places they had left nor to the place they had chosen to make their home. It was not simply that they lived between two cultures but that they lived in a third space — the limbo of migrant culture. (Wills 2017, 10.)

In *White Teeth*, this limbo is populated not only by Irie and Millat but also by Samad, whose personal “third space” is situated at O’Connel’s Pool House — a former Irish pool house transformed into a pub by an Arab immigrant family in the early 1970s. O’Connel’s is a pool house “with no pool tables” and a pub where the owner “will cook you chips, egg and beans, or

¹⁴¹ “shifter, n.” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2017, www.oed.com/view/Entry/178090. Last accessed 11 October 2017.

egg, chips and beans, or beans, chips, eggs and mushrooms but not, under any circumstances, chips, beans, eggs and bacon" (*WT*, 183–184). In other words, the place is a curious hybrid, balancing between cultures and thus reflecting its clientele, which in addition to Samad and Archie also includes two elderly domino-playing Jamaicans, Denzel and Clarence. For Samad and Archie, it is a "home from home" where they meet daily to "discuss everything from the meaning of Revelation to the prices of plumbers" (*WT*, 184), including Samad's infidelity. The pub's importance for Samad is further accentuated by his wish to get a portrait of his famous ancestor Mangal Pande hung up on the pub wall — a wish which can be read as a symbol of Samad's need to leave the migrant's limbo and assert his position by leaning on his roots solidly planted in the soil of his native country. For Samad, the portrait of Pande is, in fact, a sign of nostalgia, which instead of a "sentimental longing" can be seen as a "powerful psychological tool" restoring the continuity of the self, connecting past and present, and probably strengthening attachment to the present place of residence as well (Lewicka 2014, 81). However, when the adult Magid then one day joins his father and Archie at O'Connel's and orders a *bacon* sandwich, his sacrilegious act threatens to uproot Samad and throw him into the limbo once again:

'So you mean to *mock* me, is that it? In front of my face you wish to show me the kaffir that you are. Go on, then! Munch on your pig in front of me! You are so bloody clever, aren't you? Mr Smarty-pants. Mr white-trousered Englishman with his stiff-upper-lip and his big white teeth. [- -]' (*WT*, 454.)

In its hybrid character, O'Connel's may be a kind of no-man's-land for its mixed bunch of customers — two of whom in fact once met in a literal no-man's-land during the Second World War — yet, it is not a neutral place,

for absolutely neutral places are hard to find, as Smith compels her characters to realize (see also Ball 2004, 238–242). Both Alsana Iqbal and Joyce Chalfen agree that a neutral place — “some ground where they both felt no pressures or outside influence” — would be necessary for the two estranged twin brothers Magid and Millat to meet again face-to-face; however, “there are no neutral places any more” (*WT*, 443).

A neutral place. The chances of finding one these days are slim, maybe even slimmer than Archie’s pinball trick. The sheer *quantity* of shit that must be wiped off the slate if we are to start again as new. Race. Land. Ownership. Faith. Theft. Blood. And more blood. And more. And not only must the *place* be neutral, but the messenger who takes you to the place, and the messenger who sends the messenger. There are no people or places like that left in North London. (*WT*, 457–458; italics in the original.)

Although, miraculously, a neutral place is then found via Clara, inside the building of the university she is currently studying at, the room in question is still only an aberration, partly due to its recent construction: “The university itself was only twelve years old. Built on empty waste land — no Indian burial grounds, no Roman viaducts, no interred alien spacecraft, no foundations of a long-gone church. Just earth. As neutral a place as anywhere.” (*WT*, 458.) In a metropolis with over two thousand years of history and nearly nine million inhabitants — each of them encumbered with their own individual histories and memories — the past weighs down on every nook and cranny of the city and “everybody’s old historical shit [is] all over the place” (*WT*, 514). Thus, even the exceptionally neutral room Clara has found for the twins to meet in will, in the end, become tainted by the past as the brothers start to argue:

It escalates in moments, and they make a mockery of that idea, a neutral place; instead they cover the room with history —

past, present and future history (for there is such a thing) — they take what was blank and smear it with the stinking shit of the past like excitable, excremental children. They cover this neutral room in themselves. (*WT*, 464.)

Magid's and Millat's encounter thus evolves into a metaphor for the wider human condition in relation to past and place, as the neutral place becomes smeared not only with the "stinking shit" of the twin's own personal memories but also with the histories of the earlier generations (see also Sandhu 2003, 270; Ball 2004, 239). The twins' unresolved struggle with the past is compared to Zeno's paradoxes, as, on the one hand the twins can be seen as "two of Zeno's headfuck arrows, occupying a space equal to themselves and, what is scarier, equal to Mangal Pande's, equal to Samad Iqbal's" (*WT*, 465) and thus condemned to eternal stagnation, and on the other hand, the brothers' "race towards future" resembles the failed attempts of Achilles to catch the tortoise, described in another of Zeno's paradoxes:

The harder Achilles tries to catch the tortoise, the more eloquently the tortoise expresses its advantage. Likewise, the brothers will race towards the future only to find they more and more eloquently express their past, that place where they have just been. Because this is the other thing about immigrants ('fugees, émigrés, travellers): they cannot escape their history any more than you yourself can lose your shadow. (*WT*, 466.)

In *White Teeth*, the past is the shadow trailing after every one of the characters in the form of either their personal memories or the cultural memory of their family and their ethnic community. It is a constant companion which they cannot get rid of but instead must inevitably face at some point in their lives — a circumstance manifested by the novel's "thematic foregrounding of time, history, and causality" (Ball 2004, 242). For

Archie, the past resurfaces in the form of Doctor Perret at the press conference of the FutureMouse project, whereas Clara encounters her past every night when she removes her false teeth and assumes her “midnight voice”. Samad and Alsana Iqbal both fight their own personal battles with their shadows of the past in the third space of the first-generation migrant, not always exactly knowing where to belong, as does Hortense Bowden, too, in her anticipation of the Armageddon which would complete the symmetry of her life, begun during the Kingston earthquake.

As for the second-generation protagonists, the shadow of their cultural memory and migrant inheritance is partly concealed behind their parents, yet time and again it grabs at the children as well — although with varying results. Magid is set face to face with his shadow inheritance already at a young age, when he is sent to Bangladesh, yet, of the three children, he is the one who in the end seems to entirely misguide his shadow, thus also severing any connection with the familial memory. The teenage Irie has a short battle with her shadow when she tries to straighten and dye her hair, but her move to Hortense’s home after a row with her parents helps her to come to terms with her ancestral history again. As for Millat, his combat with the shadows of his inherited past and the cultural memory of his family eventually leads him to join the ranks of KEVIN. Thus, for the protagonists of Smith’s novel, “the past is always tense” (*WT*, 541), chasing away any neutrality of place.

Against this background, Marcus Chalfen’s FutureMouse project appears as a scientific metaphor for the immigrant protagonists’ struggle with the shadow of the past, as it focuses on the mouse as a “biological site for experimentation into heredity” (*WT*, 419), where the re-engineering of the mouse’s genome assists in eliminating both the impact of the “random” and the influence of its genetic inheritance: “The FutureMouse® holds out the tantalizing promise of a new phase in human history where we are not

victims of the random but instead directors and arbitrators of our own fate" (*WT*, 433). Thus, the project mirrors the younger immigrants' attempt to also become directors of their own life and fate and to disentangle themselves from the influence not only of genes but also of memory, history, and past — an aim for which the Chalfens ironically also afford them practical help (see also Dawson 2007, *passim*).¹⁴²

Although most of the protagonists in *White Teeth* have their ethnic and cultural roots in their ancestral home country, for the second-generation immigrant characters in particular the connection has become loose. Yet, at first sight, their efforts to instead grow their roots in the soil of their present home country appear to be partly hindered as well by the suffocating cultural root system of their parents (see also section 7.2.2 above). It seems as if their lives were characterized by a certain detachment, where they are for ever en route from here to there and back, eternally living *yonder*, i.e. in a place where they "can never really find" themselves (Hustvedt 2013, 7). This concerns especially Magid and Millat, whose lives have been saturated by Samad's continual repetition of the story of Mangal Pande, which attempts to "turn [history] into mythology" (Groes 2011, 229). As Millat reacts to yet another recapitulation of the family legend: "Whatever. End of story. *Bor-ing*." (*WT*, 226; italics in the original.)

However, regardless of the influence of their ethnic and cultural past, all the characters are still gradually making London and especially Willesden their own through the "place ballet" and "time-space routines" of their everyday living (Seamon 2014, *passim*; Seamon 1980, *passim*; see also chapters 3.2.3., 5.2.2., and 5.3. above) — a process which is shown, in

¹⁴² For an extensive discussion on Smith's novel from the perspective of the "contemporary return of eugenics" — in the form of the recent developments in genetic engineering — see Dawson 2007, 134–158 (Dawson 2007, 34).

due course, to contribute to the development of “autobiographical rootedness” (Lewicka 2014, 84).

This kind of traditional “‘everyday’ type of [place] attachment” comes through the workings of the non-declarative and mainly unconscious procedural memory — also occasionally referred to as “habit memory” — which is thus a prerequisite for our emotional bonds with the places in our lives (ibid., 79–81, 84; see also chapters 3.2.3. and 5.3. above). Naturally, the first-generation immigrant characters have earlier been able to dance their own “place ballet” already in their home country, yet, in their lives, too, these everyday time-space choreographies continue also in their new place of residence. However, for the second-generation characters — with the exception of Magid — London has so far been the only stage for these routines and, consequently, the only place to habitually and emotionally attach to.

Still, as already noted in chapter 5.3 above, in addition to the traditional type of place attachment, there are also other variations, connected to more declarative types of memory (Lewicka 2014, *passim*; see also section 3.2.3 above). For instance, autobiographical — or declarative episodic — memories, especially memories related to childhood places, support the formation of “personal identity and continuity” and the growth of nostalgia, “a powerful psychological tool” able to assist in restoring self-continuity in difficult life situations (ibid., 81). Yet, at least as relevant to the characters of *White Teeth* is the effect of declarative *semantic* memory, i.e. knowledge about the history of their families and their ancestral homeland (ibid., 82). Familiarity with one’s cultural and genealogical history has been shown to strengthen personal integrity through creating a “sense of continuity between past and present” (Apfelbaum 2000, 1011), which then also assists integration into the new place of residence (Lewicka 2014, 82).

Thus, Samad's obsession with Mangal Pande — as irritating as it has become for his family — may, in the end, prove to be a blessing for his sons, although that possibility remains open at the end of the novel.

In conclusion, the identities of the immigrant characters of *White Teeth* are built on three types of memory: the declarative memories of their ancestral history, their own autobiographical episodic memories, and the procedural memory of the everyday place ballet on the streets of Willesden. However, with regard to the recognition of *genius loci*, the different types of memories are not equal. Even though the knowledge of their ethnic and cultural heritage may strengthen their personal integrity, and their autobiographical memories may support their self-continuity, it is only through the place ballet of habitual, bodily routines that they have the possibility of truly recognizing the spirit of the city. By immersing themselves in the “time-space routines” of place ballet, they are actually partaking in the process of *place interaction*, “the major engine through which [- -] the place gains activity and a sense of environmental presence” and where *genius loci* acts as an important moderating impulse between place and people-in-place (Seamon 2014, 33; see also section 5.2.2 above). Moreover, as already noted in section 5.2.2 above, place interaction also affects the formation of *place identity*, i.e. the process by which a particular place becomes an essential constituent of our personal identity (Seamon 2014, 33–34). Thus, despite the knowledge which the characters of *White Teeth* possess about their genealogical roots and the ancestral homeland, only the present, everyday environment offers them an authentic opportunity to acknowledge and interact with the spirit of place. As Paul Conner (2009, 32) writes on the variations of place memory:

But there is a world of difference between topography as a rhetoric that is *known about*, and topography as a rhetoric that is *known*. The concept that a person has of an urban artefact

will always differ from the concept of someone who ‘lives’ that same urban artefact. For there is a type of experience recognisable only to those who have walked through a particular building or street or district. Only they have lived it. To ‘live’ an artefact is to appropriate it, to make it one’s own. This does not mean, of course, that it becomes one’s own possession, one’s property, but that one makes it one’s own by making it one with, ingredient in, one’s continuing life.

Thus, when, towards the end of the novel, the adult Irie is seen walking along the streets of Willesden, having an “odd Proustian moment”, her amble appears as a realization of the capability of memory to tether us to place and to *genius loci*, making them — to borrow Connerton’s (ibid.) words — “ingredients” in “one’s continuing life”:

Irie stepped out into streets she’d known her whole life, along a route she’d walked a million times over. If someone asked her just then what memory was, what the purest definition of memory was, she would say this: the street you were on when you first jumped in a pile of dead leaves. She was walking it right now. With every fresh crunch came the memory of previous crunches. (WT, 458–459.)

7.3. Aerial roots and *genius loci*

With their multifurcate mnemonic roots, the characters of *White Teeth* epitomize the condition of the citizens of a multicultural metropolis, a condition which Nick Bentley (2008, 54) describes as a “mix of the provincial and the cosmopolitan [- -] that is engaged in day-to-day experiences of the places they inhabit but with historical and cultural links with areas around the world”. Thus, their situation fits well in the current “transnational” view of migration as an “ongoing process” involving “continuing mobility

and communication between past and present home countries" (Gustafson 2014, 65). In other words, migration is a case of multiple place attachments — a reality which has traditionally been considered problematic if not totally impossible (Gustafson 2014, 61; Lewicka 2011, 209; see chapter 7.1 above).

Consequently, while the main root of the first-generation immigrant Londoner probably still stays in the soil of their homeland, the main root of the next generation has already fastened under the pavements of the city. This generational difference also appears in two ostensibly identical scenes in *White Teeth*, showing two of the characters walking through the high road of Willesden seventeen years apart and looking at their surroundings with dissimilar attitudes. In 1975, the pregnant Alsana Iqbal observes her environment with the curiosity of a newcomer, comparing her impressions with her earlier experiences in other places: "Willesden was not as pretty as Queens Park, but it was a nice area. No denying it. [- -]. *Mali's Kebabs, Mr Cheungs, Raj's, Malkovich Bakeries* – she read the new, unfamiliar signs as she passed." (WT, 62–63; italics in the original.) Seventeen years later, Irie Jones walks along the same road, known to her since her earliest childhood:

Mali's Kebabs, Mr Cheungs, Raj's, Malkovich Bakeries – she could reel them off blindfold; and then down under pigeon-shit bridge and that long wide road that drops into Gladstone Park as if it's falling into a green ocean. You could drown in memories like these [- -]. (WT, 459.)

Obviously, Irie's main, autobiographical root sits tightly in the London soil, and thus her first, instinctive answer to the question "Where are you from?" would likely still be the same that it was at the age of nine: she is from Willesden (cf. WT, 319; see also section 7.2.3 above). However, dur-

ing her stay at Hortense's home, her increasing knowledge about her ancestral history induces the growth of new side roots to the cultural past of her maternal family: "So *this* was where she came from. This all *belonged* to her, her birthright [- -]." (*WT*, 400.) In fact, these newly grown roots are like *aerial roots*, i.e. roots that "arise from the stem and [- -] pass for some distance through the air before reaching the soil" and "eventually assist in supporting the plant." (*BA*, s.v. "Root").¹⁴³ Yet, the second-generation immigrant characters of the novel are not the only ones with aerial roots, as the first-generation immigrants grow their own side roots as well — only mainly in the soil of their new place of residence — and, like the botanical aerial roots, this complex system of multiple roots and place attachments may, when properly grounded, act as an extra support for them, too.

Regarding the connection between memory and *genius loci*, the new transnational reality of multiple attachments and supportive aerial roots compels us to look at that relationship from a new angle as well. For the first-generation immigrant, the growth of both the main root and the supportive aerial roots is connected to the locally demarcated bodily routines of procedural memory — first in the homeland (main root) and later in the new place of residence (aerial roots). By contrast, the second-generation immigrants are initially able to fertilize their aerial roots only with declarative semantic memory, i.e., with knowledge acquired from the stories, memories, and myths of their ancestral home, which they have either heard from their parents or learnt otherwise. Yet, for both generations, the stories and myths from the former home country also act as immemorial

¹⁴³ Paul Streeten, an Austrian-born British professor of economics, uses the same metaphor in his autobiographical essay "Radici aeree" ("Aerial roots") to describe his transnational identity — to use the current terminology of migration studies: "[L]e mie radici sono aeree, come antenne che fanno di me un cittadino della comunità mondiale" (Streeten 2013, 282). ("[M]y roots are aerial, like antennae they make me a citizen of the worldwide community." STREETEN, Paul 2013: Radici aeree. *Moneta e Credito*. 39 (155). 259–282.)

collective memory, solidifying a sense of continuity despite migrational change of place and creating the “deep, horizontal comradeship” of “imagined community” as defined by Benedict Anderson (2006, 7; see also chapters 4.1.2 and 4.2.3. above). Thus, the Iqbals have their Mangal Pande and the Bowdens their Kingston earthquake, which connect them with other Bangladeshis and other Jamaicans in Britain and around the world. Still, at the same time their roots also reach for the *genius loci* of their new home country, and like Martha and little Ben visiting Westminster Abbey on the last pages of Maureen Duffy’s *Capital*, they become acquainted with their new inheritance, grounded in the immemorial myths and stories of their new home (see chapter 4.2 above). The *yonder* of the second-generation migrant may be elusive, yet at least it is held up by a robust system of aerial roots, which allows it to breathe in multiple spirits of place. Thus, instead of *displaced* memories, we should perhaps rather speak of *replaced* memories. Ergo, one probably should not be worried about the fate of *genius loci* in the modern world, for despite the increase of mobility and the multiplication of routes in people’s lives, these routes still mostly lead from one place to another, enabling people to grow their roots in several places along the way and to create memories that facilitate the sensing of the spirit of the place.

—8— Conclusion

The spirit of the city will guide them.
—Peter Ackroyd: *The Plato Papers*

In this study I have observed the intricate relationship between memory, place, and *genius loci* through the multifocal literary lens of six London novels. The novels under analysis — Maureen Duffy's *Capital*, Peter Ackroyd's *The House of Doctor Dee*, *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*, and *Three Brothers*, Michael Moorcock's *Mother London*, and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* — have been selected to provide a multi-perspective view on the formation and function of the spirit of the city. I have approached the novels with the presumption that the recognition and function of *genius loci* — and, consequently, *genius Londinii* as well — is connected not only to the characteristics of the place in question but also to the workings of memory in its various modes and, when speaking in the context of literary research, that this connection also appears in the novels selected for the corpus.

Of the four authors, Maureen Duffy, Peter Ackroyd, and Michael Moorcock have all utilized the vertico-temporal dimension of the city in their work. In the present corpus, this emphasis is especially strong in Duffy's

Capital and Ackroyd's *The House of Doctor Dee*, in both of which the temporal layers of the text reach out to the immemorial past of London, thus emphasizing urban continuity and implying the formation of *genius Londinii* along with the palimpsestic layering of the historical and mnemonic continuum. Furthermore, in both novels, the spirit of the city becomes personified, in *Capital* in the character of Meepers and in *The House of Doctor Dee* in the form of the perpetually incarnating homunculus. However, in both novels, the *genius* of urban continuity also entails the threat of its own demise.

Although the influence of the immemorial urban past can be discerned in Ackroyd's *Three Brothers* as well, the main temporal axis of the novel is shortened to the dimensions of a human lifespan. Thus, in *Three Brothers*, the spotlight is placed on the individual citizen and their relationship to a city acting as both a place of growth and a locus of the everyday "place ballet" with its coincidental choreographies of place interaction. At the same time, the spirit of the city is clothed in the double-sided robes of a mother-cum-prostitute.

In Moorcock's *Mother London* as well as in Ackroyd's *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*, the immemorial collective memory of the city is again an active influence, although in both novels the focus is on the collective suffering of the city. Still, the novels provide very different images of the innermost nature of *genius Londinii*. While in *Mother London* the collective myth appears positive and optimistic, *Dan Leno* shows the dark side of *genius Londinii*, even though both novels also suggest that the darkness may be overcome by the community of the citizens as a whole.

Yet, as I have demonstrated in my analysis on Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, over the past decades the deep temporal reach of London literature has gradually been matched by an ever-widening horizontal and transnational reach, as the first- and second-generation immigrant authors have

brought the migrant experience to the awareness of the reading public. Furthermore, these transnational tentacles have not been hovering in the air but have reached down towards countless other local histories and local spirits all around the world, forming a complex system of supportive aerial roots. The widening horizontal reach of London literature does not, however, nullify the significance of the immemorial temporal reach of the city's collective memory and mythical past. As shown by the characters of Martha and Ben on the final pages of Maureen Duffy's *Capital*, these two dimensions, in fact, cross paths in the experience of the second-generation immigrant, who has the opportunity to grow into two or more different inheritances. Here, indeed, both the real and the literary London can be said to "appear as points of intersection, integrating the local and the global, creating a 'global sense of place'", which, moreover, is in a continual state of production and reproduction (Gustafson 2001b, 6). Thus, I would here disagree with Raphael Samuel, who claims that the ancient mnemonics "had nothing to do [- -] with that sense of territorial belonging which underpins a modern politics of identity and the swelling literature on 'roots'" (Samuel 1999, viii). In my view, especially in the light of the recent findings concerning the role of the hippocampus in the formation of memories and in our relationship to our environment, Simonides's mnemonics and the "sense of territorial belonging" may both actually have the same neuropsychological foundation.

Although the focus of my study has been on London and *genius Londinii*, the questions concerning the connection between memory and *genius loci* could naturally be broadened further to encompass other cities and places as well, even the remote Finnish island visited in the introduction to this study. Although a multi-million metropolis and a sparsely inhabited island may appear as different as day and night, they are both still memory places, acting as containers of immemorial collective memories

and as places of attachment. Both have also witnessed collective suffering, which in the case of the island has manifested itself during the famine of the 1860s, the Civil War of 1918, and the years of the Second World War, with almost every house having a father or a son wounded or killed at the front. Moreover, in today's globalized world, even a secluded Tavastian island can act as a substrate for the transnational system of aerial roots, with the absolute majority of *The Family* now living elsewhere in Finland and abroad.

However, as places differ in their historical reach and in the relative proportion of private versus collective memories as archives of the place's past, a great metropolis with a millennial history offers an exceptionally tempting multidimensional proving ground for hypotheses on the relationship between memory and place. Accordingly, the historical depth as well as the multidimensional breadth of the city appear also in the corpus of this study in varying intensity, even though the observations of the present study are based on a fairly small selection of London authors and novels, and, thus, another kind of corpus might produce slightly divergent observations.

Naturally, I do not claim to have herewith found the magical and absolute recipe of *genius loci* or proven its existence in a literary text or elsewhere. Rather, my main objective has been to illustrate how literature can be a valuable asset when discussing our "emplaced" (Lewicka 2014, 79) lives in general — and vice versa. Art is never created nor enjoyed in an environmental or temporal vacuum, and, consequently, instead of functioning as mere settings for the narrative to unfold in, literary places — as imagined realities — act as reflections of our essential environmental experience. To comprehend this imagined reality in its totality — including the resident *genii* — disciplinary boundaries need to be crossed. Moreover, they should be crossed boldly, sometimes even at the risk of being accused

of dilettantism or denounced as an academic Jack-of-all-trades. For interdisciplinarity does not entail that we strive for absolute mastery in every branch of study but that, instead, we are responsive to new possibilities and ready to try new tools supplied by those who are the real masters of their own field.

In my personal view, what makes literature worth studying — and, for that matter, worth reading in the first place — is not its hermetic literariness but the way it helps us see and understand our own human condition by teaching us about life, history, space, and place, and about our relationship to them. To make use of a slightly banal analogy, a great specimen of literature could be compared to an exclusive sports car: it would certainly be interesting to peek under its bonnet and marvel at the powerful engine, and the vehicle's elegant outer contours might also deserve our sincere admiration. Yet, in the end, the most rewarding feature of the Aston Martin or Jaguar in question — of any car, in fact — is its ability to transport us to new places, thus assisting us in seizing the world and learning about our own place and its relationship to other places and cultures. Thus, rather than merely analysing the engine blueprint or describing the exact colour code of the car paint, we should more often aim to provide the community of readers and other literary scholars with driving instructions and a map, thus allowing the vehicle to express its full potential as a means of mental and cultural transportation. Of course, not everyone would select the same route or drive through the same landscapes, but at least we would have shown them that the garage door is open.

An interdisciplinary approach will thus hopefully continue to grow and enrich the humanities in the future as well, appearing also in the work of future scholars of literary London.

May *genius Londinii* guide them.

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